



Class PZ 3

Book P 547

Fol
copy 2

FOLLY AND FRESH AIR

BY

EDEN PHILLPOTTS

"Where is the life that late I led?

Why, here it is; welcome these pleasant days!"

SHAKESPEARE



NEW YORK

HARPER & BROTHERS, FRANKLIN SQUARE

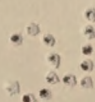
1892

Copy 2

PZ 3
P 547
Fol
copy 2

Source unknown

DEC 7 1920



TO
EXCELLENT
"MAC"
(*The Doctor of this Narrative*)
THESE PAGES ARE
Dedicated
AS A SMALL MONUMENT
OF GREAT FRATERNAL REGARD



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

The Scheme Proposed—Universal Opposition Thereto—Objectors Severally Crushed—Scheme found Throwing out Branches and Growing in Beauty—The Doctor—His Greatness—Medical Bills—Advice—Egotism of Official Colleagues—Theory of Transmigration of Souls Applied to Mine—Painful Scene with a Fishing-rod—The Dress Rehearsal *Pages 1-16*

CHAPTER II.

The Start—Loss of Nerve at Paddington—An Outrage—The Doctor Appears—Fellow-travellers—"Shockers"—Champagne—Smiling Devon—Night on the Moor—We Arrive—A Preliminary Hill—Trying Reminiscence of the Doctor as a Sleeper 17-36

CHAPTER III.

The Village of Tavybridge—A Procession—Licenses for Catching of Salmon—We Make a Start—The First Trout—Astounding Adventure with Angels—The Second Trout—The Doctor's Lack of Veracity—Satire—Local Critics 37-53

CHAPTER IV.

Sleep—Cock-crowing—Unpleasant Incident with a Looking-glass—Superstition—The Doctor has a Trance—A Golden Morning—"Man-traps Set Here"—Sport—The Landlady's

Cat—Dartmoor—A Keeper of Many Words—Concerning Miss Lucy Lynn	<i>Pages</i> 54-70
---	--------------------

CHAPTER V.

Bells—The Rival Honey Growers—A Remarkable Barber—Martyrs—The Landlady's Hobby—Ignorance of the Local Medical Man—It is Shared by Me—A Sleepy Symposium—Photography—Contemplated Book for Young Anglers—Peculiar Intelligence of Cattle—A Misunderstanding Between the Doctor and the Sun	71-88
---	-------

CHAPTER VI.

The Cat Entertains—Analysis of Feline Character—A Sea-shell—In Cloudland—Brown and Gray Harmonies—The Expert—My Abasement—Unparalleled Adventure Involving Ham Sandwiches—Highwaymen, Human and Otherwise—Nature's Trials—My Real Work in Life Frustrated	89-107
---	--------

CHAPTER VII.

A Scientific Investigation—The Violent Fisher—My Spider—On Early Rising—Reckless Assertions from the Doctor—The Sheep, the Dog, and the Hind—A Short Cut—The Doctor's Pool—Its Peculiar Tenants	108-125
---	---------

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tribulations—A Pleasant Luncheon—Advice—I Insult the Doctor—Heavy-handed Punishment—"One Woe doth Tread upon Another's Heel"—Deserted—Horrid Determination on my Part to Die—Surgical Aid—A Sophism—Evening Light—Harmony in Ebony and Silver—The Return of Peace	126-137
---	---------

CHAPTER IX.

Sunday—John Bunyan—Lamentable Experience in a Place of Worship—Suggested Congregational Etiquette Book—A Moor Church—Crimson and Gold—The Butterflies' Haunt—Among Many Graves—A Scar on the Hill-side—Idle Reflections	138-154
---	---------

CHAPTER X.

William—His Ambitions—His Enthusiasm—His Thirst for Botanical Knowledge—His Abnormal Appetite for the Blackberry—Sleep and Sunshine—Rustics—The Danger of Practical Joking—Instances Thereof—Photography—A Plea for Tolerance *Pages* 155-167

CHAPTER XI.

Two Epistles—A Thunder-bolt—Arguments For and Against General Lynn's Invitation—Unique Adventure with a Lunatic—Moments of Universal Madness—The Local Fisher—I Make a Trout-fly—It Deceives the Doctor—And Causes a Fish to Faint—Truth Still the Guiding Star—Childhood's Unhappy Memories—Bats 168-186

CHAPTER XII.

Off to Bracken Tor—Lawn-tennis Players—The General Bears no Malice—Lucy Lynn—Self-conscious People—The Exponent—A Match—"Mixed Doubles"—The General in a "Four"—Future Plans—Criticism—The Doctor Meditates a Poem, and Grows Morose—Aunt Sophia 187-203

CHAPTER XIII.

A Day with Aunt Sophia—The Woman and the Bundle—Azure and Gold—Things Hard to Tell of—The House-fly—A Meeting of Waters—The Beauty of Silence—Fishing—A New Keeper—Lost on Dartmoor—The Casting Away of Aunt Sophia—"Alarums and Excursions"—To the Rescue—Saved—Jack-a-Lantern 204-224

CHAPTER XIV.

Farewell to Aunt Sophia—Traits of Rustic Character—The Courtly General—Old Indians—Caviare—A Storm Brewing—Piscatorial Nature—How to Shoot Plover—The Doctor's Arrangements—Love and Thunder—Ajax Photographs the Lightning 225-239

CHAPTER XV.

The Last Fishing Excursion—Local Geography—Cliffs Above a Green Sea—The Doctor's Great Silence—Castles in the Air—Another Dog—Similes and Metaphors—Narcissus—The Man with a Gun—Dog or Fiend?—The Lonely Inn—Art—A Mystery—Heart-rending Complication with Local Coffee. *Pages* 240-257

CHAPTER XVI.

The Last of Narcissus—By a Wood-fire—Treating of the Doctor's Literary Effort in Five Pipes of Tobacco—Criticism and Weird Scene of Nocturnal Collaboration—The Dream and the Picture—More Criticism—My Youthful Love 258-273

CHAPTER XVII.

Various Preliminaries to a Notable Evening—The Equilibrist—A Last Trout—Mrs. Vallack Organizes a Banquet—Programmes—Eggs and Bottles—The Doors are Opened—Greenroom Mysteries—A Full and Particular Account of the Celebrated Tavybridge Penny Reading, Embracing the Performers, the Audience, and the Ultimate Artistic and Pecuniary Triumph Thereof 274-292

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Mind of Man—The Doctor's Telescopic Mental Apparatus—The Last of the Home Stream—A Company for the Extraction of Silver Linings from Clouds—Good-bye to Tavybridge—The Doctor's Misery and Despair—Vale!—A Vision of Winter and a Thought of Spring—Conclusion 293-307

FOLLY AND FRESH AIR.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCHEME PROPOSED — UNIVERSAL OPPOSITION THERETO
— OBJECTORS SEVERALLY CRUSHED — SCHEME FOUND
THROWING OUT BRANCHES AND GROWING IN BEAUTY—
THE DOCTOR—HIS GREATNESS—MEDICAL BILLS—ADVICE
—EGOTISM OF OFFICIAL COLLEAGUES—THEORY OF TRANS-
MIGRATION OF SOULS APPLIED TO MINE—PAINFUL SCENE
WITH A FISHING-ROD—THE DRESS REHEARSAL.

WHEN I publicly announced that it was my intention to go fly-fishing in the noble heart of Devon, every soul who had any excuse for interest in me argued against the project. Many others also, who were not invited to give an expression to their opinions, took it upon themselves to say that I was mistaken.

But the world is full of dissuaders. They loom up in the fore-front of every great scheme or notable undertaking you set yourself. They know your powers in every direction far better than you do; they fear you are courting failure; they use all the disheartening arguments their ingenuity can sug-

gest; and, finally, when they have diverted your intentions, they shake their heads, and tell mutual friends that never did they chance upon a being so infirm of purpose as yourself.

We were dining when I burst out with my resolve. Our circle was enjoying itself without a thought of any observation worth listening to from me. After this meal is over I am generally communicative, dinner being my last piece of work for the day. That ended, I smoke a pipe, and my family clusters round, and I tell them a thousand things of interest concerning art and ethics and science and politics—things they have never heard before, and that probably I have never heard before, or anybody. I like to interest people. It is a greater crime in society to be dull than to be untruthful. Not, of course, that I am untruthful, far from it; but there is an element of pleasure in telling folks things they have never heard until they met you. They may exclaim, they may even suspect—that matters not; your remarks give them material for novel thought; and they like you or anybody who will do this. For the same reason I read daily journals generally held to be lax in their struggle after absolute truth. “The latest edition” always excites and delights me. I feel that error may have crept into it, but uncertainty itself possesses charm, and to know that you are possibly gaining tremendous information which those who devour more cautious organs will miss altogether is, in a measure, gratifying. Upon this subject hear Bacon:

"It is not," he says, "the lie that passeth through the mind, but the lie that sinketh in and setteth in it, that doth the hurt."

I said, in a quiet, casual way,

"Next Monday will see me trout-fishing on Dartmoor."

They all spoke simultaneously, but it being impossible to reproduce here the effect thus created, I will write down each of their objections in turn.

My mother said :

"Why cannot you go abroad, like other young men?"

My sister said :

"You don't know one end of a fishing-rod from the other."

My aunt said :

"Do nothing of the kind. You never could stand getting your feet wet; and if you fish, they will, of course, be soaking from morning till night, and you may catch your death."

An old domestic, who had been in our family long before any records of it appear in history, ventured to say that she had known a young person who was born and bred on Dartmoor.

She added that this native always declared it to be a most lonesome locality, and a dangerous.

With some difficulty I traced each of these remarks to its proper source, and answered them separately. I then wound up upon the question as a whole.

"If all other young fellows went abroad," I be-

gan, "then, merely for the sake of being the most original man in the world, I should not do so ; but many remain, for divers reasons, to enjoy such leisure as Providence permits them at home. During August the sea-coast of this island is positively lined with young fellows ; and you shall meet a fair sprinkling inland also. I have no pressing reason for leaving England. I hold it desirable that one should at least achieve a nodding acquaintance with his mother-country, if possible. But think not I fear to wander abroad. Some day I shall certainly go, all being well, and trot about and enjoy the sights, and keep a diary, and do the thing handsomely."

To my sister I said :

"You accuse me of not knowing one end of a fishing-rod from the other ; but, as a fishing-rod has only one end, your remark evidently lacks that sting and point you intended for it."

In this assertion of a fishing-rod having only one end I erred, as shall appear.

To my aunt I replied :

"A sportsman may fish without sustaining so much as dampness, if he be properly equipped. My equipment will in some respects be absolutely unique ; and though moisture surround me as I follow the trout into his own element, yet the water-proof paraphernalia which I purpose acquiring will preserve me dry as tinder."

My aunt said that she knew what mackintosh meant, no one better ; and then gave her reasons for disbelieving in all mackintosh.

I turned to our venerable heirloom, she who had hinted that Dartmoor was dangerous and lonely.

"For those very qualities I seek it," I said. "I long to be alone, and in danger. I believe, if placed under conditions of extreme peril, that I should conduct myself in a way to surprise some of us not a little. There are possibilities about me in the matter of jeopardy which have yet to be fathomed. I have already done more or less heroic things. I saw a youth drowning on one occasion, and kept as cool as a cucumber about it, and remembered I could not swim, and called the attention of another man who could. Thus were two lives saved: mine, by myself, and the young fellow's, by the other man. Understand, therefore, that I desire personal, imminent peril. I court it; I shall go out of my way to meet it. It is possible that I am one of those who never feel fear, and could, if necessary, stagger a lion with his piercing eye. There are no lions on Dartmoor, but wild creatures abound, and I may get a chance of staggering something. If I do, I shall bring it home with me and have it stuffed, and hung up prominently, so that even casual visitors can see the man I am."

"There happen to be poisonous snakes on Dartmoor," said my sister.

"True; go if you will, only don't be foolhardy," added my mother.

I thought a moment—the snakes had slipped my memory. Then I passed the thing off lightly by inquiring,

“Who’s afraid of serpents?”

They knew well enough. I have told them, in weak moments, that I loathe snakes; but they did not remind me of my assertion then, for which I take this opportunity of thanking them now. Then I summed up and gave a verdict and pronounced judgment on myself; by which time they were all waiting for me to make an end of dining.

Having thus, to some extent, pulverized my family upon the question of a summer holiday, I relented and went into particulars, giving them reasons, which appeared to me sufficiently sound, for this contemplated expedition. I had, in fact, learned through the medium of a vision that I ought to go fishing. A beautiful bit of dream-scenery had spread before me, and, in the midst of it, standing by silvery margins of a silent lake, wielding a fishing-rod full fifty feet long with the ease and skill of a master, catching leviathans at every cast, and harmonizing with the landscape, I had observed myself.

“This thing,” I told my family, “shall become a reality if I can bring it about.”

Thereupon my sister hastened away to fetch a book some domestic gave her for a birthday present many years ago. This volume is called *The Book of Dreams*, and professes to give a full and particular explanation and interpretation of every dream or like mystery a man’s mind can produce. Of course, there was not a syllable about catching leviathans in a silvery lake.

The miserable work treated of idiotic nightmares

—you could not call them respectable dreams ; but the moment my simple, lucid effort confronted it the charlatan broke down and had not a word to offer.

Volumes of this sort arrest the intellectual progress of any nation. There should be laws passed to annihilate such stuff as dream-books are made of.

That night I wrote to my brother, the Doctor of this narrative. I told him my scheme, and asked him frankly what he thought of it. I said I wanted advice—not that advice would make the smallest difference to my ultimate decision, any more than it would with anybody ; but still I wanted it, because he might say that I was right to go. Then, by going, I should actually be following his advice, and thus putting him under a great obligation to me.

Of the Doctor, before he comes upon the scene, I may say that he takes a pride in his profession. He is familiar with the Latin names of bones, has written profound treatises for medical journals, keeps to my certain knowledge a human baby in spirits of wine, and altogether seems to be pressing hard on the foremost surgeons of the day. But he tells me that there are now extant certain healers who possess all his varied information, with much more besides. This, however, I take to be modesty upon his part. My own belief in him is such that I have frequently permitted him to prescribe for personal friends, and have even dallied with his choicer drugs myself upon occasion, when my system felt to need pharmaceutic aid.

The lower classes will never realize that doctors

are only ordinary beings ; but those behind the scenes see strange things and get opportunities of proving to themselves that medical men have much in common with their fellows. General practitioners, I find, work extremely hard for a living, and while doing so incur bad debts of a nature to sour angels.

Opinions concerning doctors' bills vary so considerably that to dogmatize appears dangerous ; but, personally, I am bound to confess I see no reason why a medical man should not send in a bill from time to time. I cannot help thinking that he is well within his right to do so ; and, from his point of view, it is always worth trying, because many people in the feeble, convalescent stage will settle an account which they would never dream of paying after robust health had again set in. But God bless the doctors !—specialists and all ; and if you make a rule of not paying in money, try gratitude—even that is too often denied them.

I received a sensible letter from my brother. He said I was perfectly right to go on to Dartmoor ; he declared it to be a happy thought of mine ; he observed that he contemplated a short change himself, and was half in the mind to come with me. “ But I know nothing of trout-fishing,” he concluded.

I answered this immediately. I said that he must accompany me. “ As to angling,” I wrote, “ I will soon put you up to that. It will scarcely take you a week to know as much about it as I.”

He replied, with his usual promptitude, on a post-card thus worded :

"All right; can borrow things from a friend. Have bought book on fly-fishing, so that you shall not have absolute duffer to teach."

His energy and grip of the affairs of life are extraordinary. Now he will meet me at Paddington in a day or two, with information about trout-fishing simply bubbling out of him. Before we cast a fly into the water he will know three times as much of the art as I do, and very possibly catch three times as many trout in consequence. I shall brazen it out, shall listen to him, running on about what he has read, with a knowing, experienced air; shall never permit him to suppose he is telling me anything I have not long since learned for myself; and when it comes to actual angling, I shall advise him to work down stream while I go the other way. I may here tell you that the Doctor and I are respectively called by our friends "Fortiter in re," and "Suaviter in modo," but whether these cumbrous nicknames have been reasonably and rightly bestowed upon us, this adventurous record will give you ample opportunity for deciding. I told my colleagues in business the thing I proposed to do. Those who had already enjoyed their own holidays showed a certain mournful interest in me; the others, with a selfish egotism one cannot condemn too severely, began explaining their own arrangements for the summer, forgetting that another man could not possibly feel particular interest in such purely personal plans.

Once accepted and determined upon, a thousand

minor matters, a thousand various suggestions and emendations, began to group themselves around the main scheme I had developed. A great idea is like a diamond: it flashes circles of prismatic light, that to me, from my mental point of vision, are crimson; to you, purple; to another, golden; to a fourth, the white, composite rays of Truth itself. Numerous trains of thought, all leading to points of interest and value, do stream from a great idea. After the master-mind creates a noble edifice, then lesser intellects begin to build it. In my case, however, the idea evolved and improved and grew from within itself. Thus I found, to begin with, that I knew much more about trout-fishing than I at first supposed. I treated of the angler's art to an office boy, while messengers and clerks crowded round and listened and showed interest. They asked me many questions concerning different intricate points. Some of these I answered off-hand; others, I explained, had never been satisfactorily cleared up. My official "Chief" tried to crush me—and failed. He said:

"Ah, fly-fishing. Yes, grand sport. I know a man who really can fly-fish. I have myself seen him drop a fly into a pint-pot from a distance of thirty yards—*thirty yards*, mind you! That *is* fishing!"

"Is it?" I replied, for hesitation must have been fatal. "Is it? I should not have thought so. I see little to particularly admire in such a performance. Your friend can possess no judgment. Nothing was ever yet caught out of a pint-pot except *delirium tremens*, and you don't fish for that with a fly."

People begin to suspect I have often fished. I do myself; it comes so natural to talk about it. Whether it will come equally natural to do it I shall soon learn. My own theory, up to the present time, is this: I have lived before, as the Buddhist conceit is; and in that previous existence was probably a noted fisherman. The science and skill acquired then are now coming dimly but steadily back; and if I find that I can catch trout with tolerable ease, I shall be bound to regard the transmigration of souls as demonstrable.

But an ordeal of some severity had to be undergone before I could start to the grand old Moor, carrying death and horror to many a fishy heart. It was necessary that I should purchase an outfit, and to do so must visit an anglers' emporium, and confront some more or less uncultured person whose knowledge of trout-fishing and all matters appertaining to it would certainly exceed my own.

For this interview I determined on a golden mean of conduct, lying between undue assertiveness on the one hand, and unmanly abasement upon the other. I should enter a shop quietly and naturally, and not allow myself to be astounded by anything I saw or heard; I also decided to show familiarity with the different apparatus, and select the third rod submitted to me. This I thought of doing because three is regarded as a lucky number, and because it would reveal experience and ability in me to criticise and reject two rods that looked all right.

The course thus sketched I pursued with fair suc-

cess. Finding an admirable establishment, I entered it and asked to see some fly-rods. I said:

"I happen to want a new one."

Note the "new." This, if properly understood, must have led the man to suppose that I owned hundreds of faithful, well-tried old rods, and now, just for the mad freak of the thing, thought about adding another to my collection. But it was not understood properly. The person in the shop appeared to be upset about some private concern, and answered, shortly:

"We never sell any but new ones."

Then he dived out of sight behind his counter, and brought up a fishing-rod. He put it together without a word and handed it to me. I took it from him, weighed it, and frowned. Then I shut one eye and looked down the handle, as though I purposed shooting something with it. Meanwhile the man regarded me in stony silence. I began to yearn for a word of encouragement from him. Even censure would have been more bearable than the look he cast at me. I felt as if I was doing wrong, grew nervous, and flourished the thing to show technical familiarity with it. This action fetched down a gas globe, which should have made conversation. I took the liberty of pointing out that anybody showing technical familiarity with a trout rod here must destroy that gas globe every time the man renewed it. Still his taciturnity was such that I grew foolhardy, and advised him to modify the whole scheme of his shop. This stung him into retort. He said any alteration would depend

upon the extent of my custom. If I could limit my visits, and mention the date of them beforehand, he thought he should risk leaving things as they were. For which intentionally rude remark I snubbed him. I said :

“Your rod won’t do for me. I don’t like it. I don’t like the make of it. The weight is in the wrong place. Take it away, please.”

He pulled the rod to pieces, dived with it, and brought up another. I say “another,” but it looked so suspiciously like the identical rod he had just removed that I feared treachery. He put it up, and it resembled the first at every point. I said :

“I fancy this no better than the last. The weight still appears to me badly distributed. Let me see something of a different color.”

There I had him. The two first rods were yellow, now he produced a dark brown one. I took to this from the first, thought highly of it, and ultimately purchased it. Thereupon the man brightened slightly and asked if I wanted anything else. I did require everything else, but doubted if it would be politic to tell him so. He must then have known me for a beginner purchasing an entire outfit. I might have told him I had lost all my tackle and fishing furniture in a fire, and so perhaps have deceived him in some degree, or I might have left him and bought my creel at another shop, my reel at another, my flies at a third, and so forth—like people purchase poison in small quantities at different chemists when they are bent on mischief.

I decided to be frank, and told him there was a variety of other matters I needed. Then we went together into fly-books, and gut, and lines, and reels, and nets, and minor affairs. I appeared to be buying up all the best things in the shop, and the man grew more and more cheerful. It was rather extraordinary, too, how I continually took a liking to all kinds of interesting inventions that had nothing to do with trout-fishing. There were imitation worms that I longed to secure, and handy deep sea trawls which seemed to be made for me. I also priced some fantastic bait for pike, a floating lamp, used for taking fish by night, and an otter spear; all of which things, I confess, I should like to have had for my own.

He kept me to the matter in hand, however, as closely as he could, and at length we came to the different kinds of fly—a most important consideration.

The man knew little about Devon flies, but said he had one or two regular kinds that always killed there.

I said that murderous insects of this sort, and regular in their habits, were exactly what I most required. His artificial flies appeared both beautiful and attractive. There was one named "Blue Upright," though whether for its blueness or uprightness, or the combination of these qualities, I could not gather. There were also "Red Palmers," "Silver-twists," "Black Gnats," and a quaint piebald fly known as a "Coachman." This last, I was told,

might catch many a good fish after dark. I doubted if any really good fish would allow himself to be out after dark, and the man quite saw it was a joke, and laughed and grew almost affectionate. We parted warm friends. He said he trusted I should have sport, and added that if there was anything I needed while away I had better "wire" to him. For my part I thanked the man, and congratulated him upon his collection of prawn-snaring contrivances (which, though I knew they would be practically useless to me on Dartmoor, I none the less coveted). In the matter of sport I told him I was sanguine, though well aware that success is not to be commanded, and, finally, I promised that did any occasion for further angling necessities arise he should be the first to hear of it. My other purchases were made without adventure at an India-rubber store.

When I reached home and spread the spoil out, everything looked even better and more convincing than in the shops; so after dinner I humored my family, and dressed up in all that I had bought and put the rod together, and showed them how you fish—that is, how I fish. They were most encouraging. They said that they never thought it was in me to go off and buy such an outfit as this single-handed. They declared, of the rod, that it looked like catching anything; and, as a matter of fact, it did catch a trifle or two before I could get it down again. Of course a man must have ample room when fly-fishing. Give me the great desolate moorlands.

By-the-way, a rod may have two ends. Mine has.

I was wrong again, it seems. Anglers call them "tops," but they are none the less ends, as my sister pointed out.

The eve of departure finds me packing far into the night. To-morrow the Doctor will meet me at Paddington, and, together, full of courage and confidence, tempered with just enough modesty for two, we shall enter upon the campaign.

CHAPTER II.

THE START—LOSS OF NERVE AT PADDINGTON—AN OUTRAGE
—THE DOCTOR APPEARS—FELLOW TRAVELLERS—“SHOCK-
ERS”—CHAMPAGNE—SMILING DEVON—NIGHT ON THE
MOOR—WE ARRIVE—A PRELIMINARY HILL—TRYING REM-
INISCENCE OF THE DOCTOR AS A SLEEPER.

I AM sitting at my ease in a hansom cab. Above me is a portmanteau and a cricket bag; beside me are the implements of that art I shall to-morrow be practising. I look out on the world, and feel kindly and large-hearted to everybody. I wish the whole of London was coming down to Dartmoor to loll about and breathe fresh air for once, and watch me fish. The thin and the care-worn, the desolate and the sad-looking flash past in one rapid panorama; the busy, the happy, the pompous, the poor fill every street and wait at every crossing for me to pass. And yet I know that these are not really human beings I see around me; it is not the roar of a working city which I hear. The men and women are ghosts and phantoms, the thunder in my ears is but an echo of past storm and toil, for we are half-way through August and London is empty. It must be empty; the newspapers all keep saying so. I detest that phrase. I should like to injure the sycophantic idiot who first made use of it. I believe when the

classes to which it refers read it, they blush. "Empty!" Was Paris empty—?

There I go! It is always the same if I get a holiday. The cap of liberty renders me unmanageable in a moment, and I burst out into a socialistic fever. I may not grow lucid again until I am chained to my desk once more. By the time I reach Paddington I shall be a red republican and refuse to pay for my ticket and incite the porters to mutiny, and ultimately get myself destroyed while fighting tooth and nail for my beloved country behind a barricade of the nobility's luggage.

These dreams fortunately come to nothing. The porters and people are too busy to heed any treasonous declaration from me. For the matter of that, the air is already thick with short inflammatory speeches of every kind. Some folks lose their nerve fearfully when starting on a journey. I determine to keep myself to myself. I don't want to irritate the whole staff of Paddington just because I am going into the country. If this wild crowd could leave off worrying and stand still a moment and watch me getting quietly through all the preliminaries of the start, it might benefit greatly.

First find a porter. Make sure he is a porter, and then call him "Guard." This I did, and gave the man in question my baggage. I told him exactly what I wanted, and promised a reasonable reward if he would secure me two corner seats in a third-class smoking-carriage that was bound for Devonshire. He vanished, but I felt no fear. I had called the

man a guard: his honor was now at stake. If he behaved like a guard, he would be rewarded like a guard; and if he could keep up his character of guard by putting me into a second or even a first-class carriage at the last moment, I knew that he would do so.

I now go to the booking-office, to see individuals who have apparently never had occasion to take a ticket in their lives before. The unfortunate clerk has much to suffer here, but he shall find that a few rational people still travel third-class. I will come like a ray of brightness into his life. When my turn arrives, therefore, I step forward and speak briskly and to the point. I say:

“Third single, Devon.”

The man did not rush to a pigeon-hole and get a ticket and punch it and dash it down. He simply shook his head and sighed; then, turning, murmured to somebody behind him:

“Lord! what’ll they want next?”

Then he spoke to me:

“There’s several stations in Devonshire. Got any particular fancy?”

Now the insolence of hired officials always maddens me. Such language as this, from a paltry Jack-in-office, was more than a man could be expected to stand. I confess it, I boiled over with indignation. I asked him how he dared to speak to the public in that way. I was going into the question of reporting him, when some fool, instead of backing me up in the interests of passengers generally, must needs

interfere and advise me to clear out of the box, and not make a show of myself, and not stop there all night, and give the others a chance, and leave the poor, over-worked man alone. I took my ticket, and went off and lost heart about going to Devonshire at all. Every man's hand seemed to be against me. One moment I was the only collected, cool being on that huge platform; the next I found myself reduced below the level of a Bank Holiday excursionist. I became entangled with a brace of sporting dogs who were going to Scotland, and hated the whole business and seemed in a worse state even than I was. One snapped at me, more in terror than rage, and I snapped back and raised a fishing-net which I was dragging about. In the act to strike, however, a monstrous mountain of boxes on a truck bore down upon us, and very nearly settled the matter forever as far as the dogs and I were concerned. We all leaped wildly in different directions. They brought up one on each side of a weighing-machine, while I cannoned against an elderly woman, who was trying to kiss another elderly woman, who was doubtless going by train. A frightful complication ensued. Instead of kissing her, one elderly woman bit the other, and the bitten elderly woman did not understand that the thing was an accident, but implied, between outbursts of hysterics, that the other elderly woman had done it on purpose. Then my self-respect left me. I had separated two old friends, perhaps for life—worse: the bitten one might die, and did she do so, it was idle to suppose the other would long survive her. I

slunk away and hid behind automatic toffee apparatuses, and avoided men's eyes and conducted myself so suspiciously that I believe plain clothes detectives were told off to watch me. This chaos of events happened inside two minutes and a half ; and then a voice that I knew fell upon my ear, and a hand I also knew upon my shoulder-blade. Turning, I beheld the Doctor, cased in a tweed suit that bristled with pockets. He was followed (not led) by a porter, and looked cool and dignified with the self-reliant gaze I should think he might put on when he fights Death for some patient's life. Had he been the cynosure of every eye, instead of a unit in a stupid, hot-headed mob that did not know him from Adam, and did not want to, he could hardly have borne himself more gracefully. I said :

“Oh, you've come ! There are a couple of splendid corner seats waiting for us somewhere.”

He answered :

“Good. Just hold on to those, old man. I shall be back in half a second.”

He then vanished, leaving me wrestling with a mass of fishing accoutrements, the things he had doubtless borrowed from some confiding patient. At this moment my porter saw me, and swooped down upon me joyfully. He said that all the third-class “smokers” were full ; but that he and the guard of the train had talked it over quietly, and settled that my friend and I might travel second-class. Somehow, the knowledge of this fact mitigated my sufferings. Human nature loves to get more than its

money's worth. I took heart, and was on fairly good terms with myself when the Doctor came back again.

He brought with him every sort of bodily refreshment ; and not to be behind him, I now hurried off and made a raid upon a book-stall. We cannot eat and drink and smoke for six hours ; there may be times when we shall want to read. I bought four "shilling shockers" and the illustrated weekly papers. I also secured a serious work to study in the evenings while I was away, and a guide to Devon. Then I purchased a railway lamp, and a knife off a card, and a pencil-sharpener, and a travelling hat for the Doctor, and a few other absolute necessities. I was just cheapening the price of a rug when my brother came and dragged me away.

It is amusing to see how people fly at a book-stall the last thing before a journey. It shows great lack of forethought and economical feeling. Take the "shilling shockers," for instance. If I had bought these yesterday at my bookseller's, I should have saved threepence on each, thereby reducing them to "ninepenny shockers." But people like to do these things. They generally spend more than is necessary at the start of a holiday, but cut it pretty fine coming back.

I arranged our corners snugly and comfortably. Our things filled both the hat-racks and made a good show on the seats as well. From my point of view the carriage was full, but a prying inspector peeped in and was astounded to find such comparative loneliness, and shouted, "Room here !"

There was a rush of four on the strength of this untruthful assertion. An iron-gray man led the way, followed by a clergyman with a cold, and two sailor-boys with bundles. None of these people proved very interesting to us, excepting, perhaps, the iron-gray man, and it was only his method of amusing himself that made him attractive. He lighted a pipe, and settled down to Bradshaw, and read it from the beginning onward, as one might read a work of fiction. He evidently regarded it as such. We offered him the papers, but, after glancing through those which contained pictures, he turned from them back to the more enduring delights of the railway-guide. Sometimes he smiled, sometimes did little problems on paper; and I could see he was running trains into one another, and working out the collisions that Bradshaw provides for, and getting quiet, genuine fun from the book.

The clergyman suffered terribly. He said he had been a victim to this identical cold ever since he was twelve years of age. He was now two-and-forty, and, to him, there seemed every appearance of the thing becoming chronic. We cheered him, and the Doctor cited instances of men who had endured just such a malady as his, and suddenly, when they had given up all hope, it had left them and vanished, never to return. He promised to send the clergyman a prescription in a fortnight's time, and the sufferer thanked him, and said that as he had stood the cold for thirty years a couple of weeks more could not make much difference either way.

As for the sailor-boys, they should not have been allowed to travel second-class. They would have disgraced a luggage train. One had apples with him, and the other red-herrings. They were going to Plymouth to join their training-ship. They had already come from Yarmouth that morning, and were sulky and sad, and more or less profane, because their holidays were over. The boy with the apples made use of the same adjective six times in a short sentence, wrongly applying it in every case. This word, I could see, was the backbone of his vocabulary. He used it unsparingly; he worked it to death, and found that it lent nervousness and color to his various narratives and reminiscences. Both lads smoked some horrible and searching compound which necessitated lavish expectoration; and presently, when the more assertive of them went to sleep with his head pillowed on the red-herrings, we all agreed that rest was what he wanted, and forbade his comrade to wake him up again.

The Doctor, as I expected, soon began upon our errand. He asked when and where I learned to fish. He said he had borrowed some splendid gear from a man who knew all about it. He told me several things which surprised me; among others, that we should both have to get licenses before we could fish. If we did not, we should be poaching instead of fishing honorably, and should probably be taken away by keepers and haled before Justices of the Peace, and by them sentenced to terms of imprisonment, the shortest of which would possibly extend

beyond the limits of the spare time at our disposal. These facts certainly gave the future an air of importance. I thought anybody might fish in a Dartmoor stream; but when it comes to keepers and magistrates and licenses, the undertaking grows more serious and business-like. Then I told the Doctor what I knew, and explained some of the tricks of the trade, and showed him my book of flies, pointing out those which were never known to fail.

He said:

"That is very well; but a day of practical experience beats all the talk of shop-people, who have an interest in selling things, and, of course, say the best they can for them. What is your own opinion? Have you yourself known these flies to fail?"

"Well, candidly, I never have seen them fail yet," I answered; adding, mentally, that perhaps it was on the cards I should get some such experience before long.

Our conversation began to grow "shoppy." I can see that we are just the men to tell tall fishing stories to perfection, and build up splendid anecdotes and tremendous adventures. For my own part, I feel I could already blossom out into tales of past achievements, nor would the fact of never having achieved anything in the past cause me to hesitate; but I know that such a course must put my brother at a disadvantage, for he has openly confessed to never fishing before. I have it under his hand and seal.

Presently we subsided. The Doctor picked up a newspaper, I, the first volume from my library of shilling romances. It described rather a funny series of family murders by a medical student. He began with the purely tentative assassination of an aunt; he then killed three distant connections, using a different poison in each case. Encouraged by these preliminary successes, he destroyed his parents, hoodwinked the cream of Scotland Yard, and ultimately, after leaving no member of his unhappy race alive, slew himself in a thunder-storm on the Alps.

Feeling better and greater for this study, I handed it to my brother with a word of praise. He read two chapters, upon my recommendation, and then, in a fit of foolish, professional fury, pitched the book out of the window, saying that its toxicology was fearful.

I blamed him. I said:

“You cannot be too careful in distributing literature. That book was never written for plate-layers and other people who have business on the six-foot way. Now some narrow-minded navvy may pick up the thing, wade through it, and missing the lesson it teaches, be caught with its meretricious dazzle of successful crime. Fired by such an example, he may try it himself, and poison somebody, and fail to escape, and so make a bad end. Or the book may throw a train off the rails; it is exciting enough to do this.”

At Swindon the Doctor's forethought on the ques-

tion of commissariat became apparent. While others were fuming and struggling at the refreshment bar, greedily devouring anything that was thrown to them, and begging, like the sorriest mendicants, for something to drink, we, in our second-class corner, organized a princely banquet. My brother got down a luncheon basket, full of the most delicate sustenance. Then he plunged under the seat for his cricket-bag, from which he extricated, with some difficulty, a bottle of champagne and an India-rubber cup. This champagne, as it illustrates a very peculiar trait in the Doctor's character, must have a paragraph to itself.

Champagne in trains is one of his great hobbies. He never will go anywhere without a bottle. No matter how short the journey or how unimportant, some part of it is always spent in drinking champagne. If he had to travel on the Underground Railway between—say the Temple and Charing Cross—he would contrive to get an element of champagne into the trip. He always shares it with somebody else if there is a fellow-passenger. Cautious people occasionally suspect the Doctor is trying to drug them, and refuse to drink. If he has to travel alone, he invites in a guard to make merry. There was a guard on a Great Northern express who nearly lost his life crawling down outside the carriages to take wine with my brother. But a man might have a worse fad than this. There is no doubt that champagne whiles away the time in a train. You get the excitement of opening it and

criticising it and pouring it out, and, of course, drinking it. The amusement is even greater if you have such a vessel as we had, for the number of men in England who have drunk champagne out of an India-rubber cup is probably to be counted on one hand.

We hastened onward past beautiful Bath and grimy Bristol, with a fair vision of Clifton and its mighty bridge seen dimly behind a veil of smoke; then, through Somersetshire, and at last, in setting sunlight, amid ruddy promises of apple harvest and golden fields of waving corn, amid Devon orchards and Devon pasturages, laced with silver streams, into a land of peace and plenty we glided, and drew up at the sleepy capital thereof.

I may remark that our destination was Tavybridge, a Dartmoor village, distant about ten miles from Plymouth, and having a railway station all to itself, with time-tables and signals, and a siding and a station-master, and everything complete. Here lodgings, already secured by post, awaited us, but before reaching our haven it was necessary to change trains at Exeter. Changing of trains is sometimes a troublesome business if you have luggage; but, as the Doctor pointed out, our heavy goods were labelled and could not go wrong, and though we were not labelled and therefore at our own risk, yet all went well, and the final stage of the pilgrimage was quickly reached.

Then, in a fading glimmer of opal, western light we found ourselves out on Dartmoor. The great,

gloomy land stretched away into distant darkness. Here we rushed through cuttings deep and black; here sped round the shoulder of some lofty hill; here hastened across spidery viaducts that hung above forests, and wildernesses of rock and tiny white threads—which we knew were trout streams—boiling and bubbling down the deep gorges. And presently the stars vanished, and the gold and crimson clouds that had an hour before flooded the western sky grew black and massed themselves into a vast dome of driving mist; while finally, after passing many small stations with singular names, we stopped at the smallest of them all; and the guard declared it to be Tavybridge, so we got out, stiff and drowsy, and our luggage was pitched out after us. Then the train steamed away until its red tail-lights vanished in the mist, and we, feeling lonely, turned to seek local aid and guidance.

The Doctor called for a cab, as Britons invariably do, no matter where chance may find them. I know men who, if they fell out of a balloon onto the North Pole, would immediately call a cab, supposing they had enough breath left for the purpose.

Those to whom my brother gave his order laughed, and one said:

“Bain’t no such thing i’ the plaace.”

“How are we going to get these portmanteaus and bags away, then?” I asked.

“’Pends wheer you wants ’em tuk tū,” answered the man.

“We want them taken down to the village, or up

to the village, as the case may be," and I mentioned the name of the house. The porter called a mate, who showed a ray of dawning intelligence.

"You wants to go down long over the bridge, I reckon," he said. The Doctor mentioned that our future landlady was one Mrs. Vallack; upon hearing which the second porter's dawning intelligence burst out into quite a sparkle of intellectual brightness. He knew perfectly whom we meant. He had known her for years. She was a married woman with one child. He was actually related to her—her husband, in fact. Nothing could have been more opportune than this meeting. He would take our luggage on a truck, and lead us to the place. We asked him if we were expected. He said for all he knew to the contrary we might be. His wife looked after letting the rooms and such like; the railway took him all his time. It was his custom to get up at five o'clock in the morning and shunt trucks. He said it was useful work that he liked and did well. He added that no healthier occupation could be found anywhere.

It is interesting to note how fond men grow of work they can do well. The meanest tasks acquire a certain dignity when we find their exponents thus superlatively clever, each after his kind; and each properly impressed with the importance and value to the community of his own particular occupation. Take fish-cleaning. This is the main business in life of many men; and they are right to pride themselves on their ability, for the success of ten thousand dinners daily hangs upon their efforts.

We started down a hill of infinite steepness, and walked in single file, that none of our property might be left by the way-side. Every ten yards or so something dropped off the truck. A few trifles rolled on ahead, and the man told us we should find them altogether at the foot of the precipice; but others stuck in the hedges, and we were kept actively employed. What the Doctor missed, I, walking last, recovered. Presently I picked up a lawn-tennis racket—one of Tate's, a very high-class affair of my brother's. He insisted on bringing it, though I told him lawn-tennis was out of the question. He is an enthusiast in this matter, and carried his point. He said that one never knows what may happen. Poor misguided man! for him, in the near future, there looms an experience connected with this pastime that shall prove an earthquake in the even high-road of his life.

We reached the bottom of the hill, crossed a bridge, and struck off into Cimmerian darkness. Our leader himself appeared a little uncertain of the route. He said that he had only lived in his present habitation a matter of two years.

"'Tis a roundabout way, sure enough," he admitted. We urged him on and made suggestions, and he concentrated his energies and got up a sort of bank with the truck; then he turned another corner and we had arrived before an open door, casting a flood of warm light through the gloom, and dimly outlining the house to which it formed an entrance. A pleasing, tiny cottage it was, smothered up in

trees and flowers and twining foliage. The murmur of water sang in our ears from some adjacent spot, great red and yellow roses peeped out of the night on either side, scenting the damp air.

The landlady welcomed us in a right spirit of hospitality, and conducted us to a repast already prepared. She said she knew her Bill would bring us safely along. The supper was a Devon one. We had squab pie (a mystery of blended flavors), cream and honey, pasties of summer fruits, junket, and cider or small beer as we chose.

After these things we smoked and laid plans until the question of rest was raised. Then Mrs. Vallack gave us a choice between two courses. Either we might share a double-bedded chamber, or else one of us might have a single room here and the other a similar apartment next door. It appears we are semi-detached. An apple-tree conceals the remainder of the building entirely and deceives the most gimlet-eyed people.

I do not rest in the same room with the Doctor. He is the most energetic sleeper. His nights are one long series of "alarums and excursions;" that is, when he finds himself in a strange bed. Force of circumstances once made it necessary for me to repose with him on a winter's night in a four-poster at an inn. I remember the whole affair as though it happened yesterday. He said "Good-night to you," and gave himself a sharp half-turn and was apparently asleep in a moment. The half-turn had embraced everything the bed was made of, excepting the corner of

one blanket, which I employed to the best advantage I could, not caring to waken him. He might have slept about two minutes when he began talking generally. Now I object to hear men discussing their private affairs in sleep. There may be some horrid secret in the Doctor's life, some black, dastardly business of his youth he would rather I did not know, and which I would much rather not know myself. I therefore roused him by dragging a pillow away, and so shattered his pending confession in the bud. Thereupon he laughed a wild laugh, and grit his teeth, which is a hateful sound to hear in the still watches of the night. Presently he began plunging up and down, like a ship at sea. Then he shook the whole framework of the bed, and sat up and slapped his pillow and tore the clothes into great mountains round him, leaving me pretty much as I was born. His next move was to strike a match and look at the time. He evidently thought it had been near morning, and he sighed a heart-rending sigh when he found it still five minutes short of two. He was silent, thinking over this for a while. Then a cuckoo-clock struck the hour just outside our door. This brought him out of bed instantly. "That doesn't go on," he said to himself; "no human being could sleep through that." So he disappeared, striking matches, and hitting himself against the furniture. I had half a mind to lock the door on him, but did not risk it. He would have roused the house. I contented myself, therefore, with grabbing as much of the bed as I could carry off, and sneaking into a

corner, between a wash-hand-stand and the wall, and there camping out in coldness and misery, but comparative safety. Presently he returned. He was laughing softly, and when he lighted a match to see his way back, he looked as though he had been out committing a murder. He did not miss me, which I was thankful for, but he missed his pillow and the top sheet of the bed, and one or two other trifles. I heard him pulling the drapery about, and tugging and tearing and whispering questionable words. Then something gave way, and quiet reigned for nearly three minutes. Suddenly, without any warning, he flung a boot at me, as I lay peacefully in my corner. He failed to hit me, but the boot landed on the wash-hand-stand, and broke a vessel there which contained water almost at freezing point. This poured straight down onto my chest. Then I spoke up in a voice hoarse with rage and sleep. I said it was a sin and a shame to make night hideous in this fashion. I said if he wanted to conduct himself like some nocturnal beast of prey, he had better go and do so out of doors. I asked him what he meant by daring to fling things at me. He said:

“Oh! it's you, is it? I thought it was mice. What the dickens d'you want crawling about in corners at this hour of night for?”

I answered:

“I'm not crawling about—merely trying to get a wink of sleep, if you would give me half a chance.”

Then he asked:

“Why cannot you sleep in bed like a Christian?”

I replied, bitterly:

"I can, and generally do. You don't know what Christian sleep is. I'd rather go to bed with a hyena than with you."

"Well," he said, "I'll thank you for the top sheet of this bed."

"Never!" I answered, and told him that such meagre fragments of covering as I had been able to secure should not leave me while life remained. Almost immediately afterwards he snored, and I myself sank into troubled slumber. In rather less than half an hour he leaped up again, crying for air, and declaring that the ventilation was beneath contempt. He opened the window, though it was a bitter night, and organized a biting blast that nearly blew me out of my corner. Then he told me not to keep whining all night, but at least give him an opportunity to sleep, if I did not want to do so.

Again there was silence, broken this time by a sound so unearthly and so near that I felt my heart stop beating to listen. The Doctor was all across the room in a second, full of life and excitement.

"It's a death-rattle!" he said.

"Death-rattle!" I answered, with feeling, for I had grasped the nature of the thing. "It is that wretched cuckoo-clock trying to 'cuckoo,' and failing because you have destroyed its inside. To-morrow you will be summoned, and I'm jolly glad of it."

The clock went on imitating a death-rattle for at least a minute; then its emotion became more than

it could support, and we heard it apparently fall down-stairs.

Next morning I rose early and watched my brother sleeping, and smiling in his sleep like an infant. He awoke leisurely and asked me how I had fared. He had evidently forgotten everything. I answered, with satire, that I had rarely enjoyed a better night, and he was glad, and said that he, too, had done very well for a strange bed and felt much refreshed. If this is one of his good nights, his indifferent nights must be interesting to watch, and his right down bad nights a sort of superior devils' dance or Walpurgis revel.

So the Doctor, it is decreed, shall lie next door; and we tell the landlady that we breakfast early, as a rule, but not to-morrow.

CHAPTER III.

THE VILLAGE OF TAVYBRIDGE—A PROCESSION—LICENSES FOR CATCHING OF SALMON—WE MAKE A START—THE FIRST TROUT—ASTOUNDING ADVENTURE WITH ANGELS—THE SECOND TROUT—THE DOCTOR'S LACK OF VERACITY—SATIRE—LOCAL CRITICS.

A DAYLIGHT survey of the cottage revealed many interesting facts about it. Both from artistic and sporting stand-points the place was beautifully situated. We, the cottage and the Doctor and I, nestled amid trees in a valley; the moorland extended above and before; separated only by an orchard and a strip of meadow, there ran the stream we had heard singing on our arrival—a typical mountain trout-stream, doubtless well stocked with typical mountain trout.

The day was fine, and we found ourselves up and eating breakfast much earlier than seemed likely over-night. The Doctor had made rather a startling discovery on the preceding evening. He told me that though the semi-detached house in which he slept modestly hides behind an apple-tree, and upon this side looks as innocent a little building as possible, yet upon the other side it throws off all disguise, and stands up square and bold by the high-road, and extends a sign that declares it to be a

place of refreshment for man and beast. Within he found a landlord and a bar and a bar-parlor, but everything clean and well ordered. His chamber faced out upon the modest side of the building. He could leap from it into the apple-tree, he explained, and added that if there was a fire he should do so. He found, also, that the window of his room might almost be reached from mine, which fact led to some tribulation, as shall presently appear.

We resolved to lose no time in hastening to Plymouth after breakfast, in order to return the sooner, legally qualified to begin sport. A train left Tavybridge for Plymouth at eleven o'clock, and by this it was decided we would travel.

The Doctor suggested starting early for the station, in order to get a sight of the village by the way; but it was impossible to help doing so, for we found that what we had taken the previous evening to be merely some desolate sheep-track down the face of an almost perpendicular precipice, was in reality the High Street of Tavybridge. The life and industry of the place extend up this tremendous acclivity. Here is the cottage where West of England newspapers are sold through a side window; here is the post-office and centre for buying honey; here may be seen a blacksmith's forge, a police constabulary station, a church "fast bound in misery and iron," except on Sundays; and a sort of pocket Whiteley's, where you can get anything you need, from a mouse-trap to a coffin. The chain of connecting links between these two dissimilar articles

is worth noting. The mouse-trap suggests cheese, the cheese suggests nothing but itself, for we tried it. Then we have tea and sugar and fusees and candles and household goods generally, and wearing apparel and jewelry and trinkets and articles of vertu and clothes-pegs. Almanacs flame with the crude horrors of cheap chromo-lithography. There are also to be bought children's playthings and sweetmeats. Finally may be mentioned quaint preparations of elderberry and wild raspberry, concocted after recipes of which the secret is carefully preserved. These are flaunted in bottles and labelled "Wine," of which, when a man drinks, he shall come, peacefully and speedily, to require nothing further save the narrow resting-place above named.

It was necessary, before ascending this remarkable street, to cross the stream already mentioned. The Doctor pushed on here, and for a few moments I found myself alone upon the solid and ancient bridge which gives its name to the village. Strictly speaking, I am wrong to say that I was quite alone. Upon the coping of the bridge there sat a strangely beautiful fly. Its eyes were brown and protuberant, its body gleamed with dazzling, metallic lustre, its transparent wings flashed in the morning sunlight. It was, in fact, a blue-bottle, and I wanted it. The idea in my mind had reference to an experiment. I conceived that trout must like such a fly as this, and would probably rise and devour it if they got a chance to do so. There was a deep pool just below the bridge, and by floating the fly gently over this

it might be possible to prove what the stream contained of a trouty nature.

The blue-bottle was tidying himself for the day, when I stole upon him from the rear, and with a dexterous jerk of the hand made him a prisoner. I did not kill him, but merely struck him lightly twice over the back of the head with a pipe-stem, thus rendering him unconscious for the time. If there be no trout below, he need fear nothing. He will float gently down, and the cold water will revive him, and he will presently bring up fast on a straw or what not, and think and rest, and ultimately fly home, with no worse hurt than a passing headache. If, on the contrary, there are trout waiting, he will die a valuable death and a comparatively painless one. I thought this out in a kind-hearted way and pitched him in. All was over before one might count five. A trout of insignificant size, but audacious to a degree I could scarcely have imagined, rose from its lair and gorged the ill-fated insect. Not a leg was left to tell the tale, and the trout disappeared, leaving but a bubble of foam to mark the blue-bottle's untimely grave.

That there are trout here is now proved beyond question. I can see them rising and feeding freely. They appear small, for the most part, but this is an optical illusion. The water makes them look small; moreover, the smallest fish are sweetest. I must never forget this last maxim. "Quality before quantity" shall be my watchword. Give me sweetness rather than size.

I presently overtook the Doctor watching a procession. The procession consisted of one duck, coming down the hill on a sort of raised foot-path. It was walking as though keeping time to military music. It bowed occasionally to the right and left. It spread itself out, and seemed to embrace banners and trophies and chariots. It was a regular triumphant entry, with a cheering mob and brass bands and illuminated addresses. It went swaggering and "my lording" it down the hill, simply bursting with importance, till it tripped and fell heels over head into the road. Then it threw pomp to the winds, and got down into a gutter, and wagged its tail, and went on like a common duck that one would not look round after. The whole scene was, I believe, undertaken that we might gain amusement, for a duck, when it is in the vein, can go through a bit of tomfoolery, keeping its face the while, and preserving a stolid, serious air throughout, in a manner quite irresistibly entertaining. There are not a few men, by-the-way, whose lives may be compared, in each individual case, to a triumphant procession of one. Such contain in their own persons all the component parts of a Lord Mayor's show. Right egotists that they are, to them neither time nor earth nor life can show any considerable facts or certainties save the supreme fact and certainty of their own existence ; and they stamp and splutter their little hours, each crying, "Self, self, self ; look at me and learn, ere I be taken up to Heaven as a thing too choice to waste my sweetness here." But it

comes about that among all those strange ciphers which go to make the sum of mankind, none are so friendless, unhonored and unwept, as these poor self-adorers. Let every man allow handsome discount from the price he is secretly disposed to set upon himself; let no man live on a Stylite's pillar of his own importance and conceit. Viewed from the ground, he ever appears singularly ridiculous there. And avoid getting self-opinionated. Opinions and prejudices are frequently synonymous terms. Nine men out of ten have too many opinions and too little information.

We reached the station, and found Mr. Vallack. He pointed out sundry cattle-trucks in a siding. These, he said, were to be added to our train when it arrived; and he explained how he should arrange and carry through the whole affair himself, with never a bit of help from a soul. But a horse performed the manual labor, while he did the head-work.

I was amazed to find, when we reached Plymouth and applied for licenses, that in addition to buying those which would allow us to catch trout, we had also to purchase permission to secure salmon.

I said:

"Surely there must be some mistake. I have not come down here to catch salmon. Such a step would involve a new creel, and a thousand other things. Now cannot you take our united word for it? If we catch a salmon we will put it back at once, and be particularly careful not to hurt so much as a fin. This we promise."

The man said :

“It is a rule of the Association. You cannot have one without the other.”

So we bought both. The salmon license is certainly rather gratifying to read, though it probably will not amount to much, at any rate, in my case. As for the Doctor, he is just the man to get excited about this wholesale permission to fish for salmon, and fling himself into it, and grasp the spirit of the thing, and finally secure magnificent thirty and forty-pound specimens, which would have been perfectly safe from him had the Fishing Association not made such a fuss about it, and insisted upon empowering him to angle for them.

My license, as I say, reads remarkably well :

“The Board of Conservators, appointed for such and such a District, being so much of such and such Rivers and their Tributaries as is situate in such and such Counties, and also so much of another River, and also the estuaries of the said Rivers, and so much of the Coast as is defined by a Certificate under the hand of one of Her Majesty’s Principal Secretaries of State, deposited in the offices of the Clerk of the Peace for such a County, by virtue of the powers vested in them under the Salmon Fishery Act, 1865, do hereby authorize ME to fish with a Rod and Line, for Salmon,” etc., etc.

I think this is handsome. You would be surprised to know how cheap it was. By - the - way, while allowing a rod and line, they carefully abstain from saying anything about a hook or fly. I

always thought these legal documents were so exact, too.

At the establishment where our licenses were procured, and which, I may say, is a highly celebrated one, kept by a most expert and able fisherman both on sea and river, we bought a variety of new flies, designed after well-known local insects, which moor trout preferred before those that were less familiar to them. We also purchased a guide to the streams we should presently assail, and a map of their divers courses.

I read the guide as we returned to Tavybridge by an afternoon train, and the Doctor grappled with the map.

Now there was nothing between the trout and death but a few fleeting hours of time. The Doctor and I partook, on returning, of a light tea, and as the clock struck six sallied forth, armed to the teeth, to fish till darkness should end the day.

We crossed the bridge, turned to the left, up stream, and quickly found ourselves by the water. The fishing varied with the country: some was beautifully open, some—all the best spots—we regarded, on this first visit, as quite inaccessible. We passed by several likely reaches, on account of the trees that hung over them. We saw that if a big fish was hooked in these places there would be no possibility of landing him. Finally, we came out on to an open meadow, before some perfect water below a little weir.

The Doctor said:

“There can be no excuse for not fishing here. I’m going to begin.”

I replied:

“My boy, you couldn’t have a better chance than you will get here. Take my advice and fish every inch of it. I’ll go on above the water-fall.”

I left him cheerily putting up his rod as though to the manner born. About half a mile or so beyond, Dartmoor stretched forth a hand, laden with fern and golden gorse and heather and briers, and came down to kiss the little river. The stream’s banks here shelved gradually, and the water presented a series of miniature lakes, each of which my fisher’s instinct told me contained its colony of trout.

I put up my rod, and it flashed in the ruddy rays of the setting sun. I got the gear into working order and fastened on two flies, both warranted killers. I then cast forth for a draught. Nothing happened. The flies went sailing along, looking wonderfully life-like, and there must have been fish about that saw them, but not a trout rose. I tried again with the same meagre result, and so began gradually working up stream, flogging the water industriously. It was a perfect evening. Great shafts of glory fell across the meadow from the west; a delightful freshness filled the air; gnats danced old country-dances over the river. I was watching one of these merry little companies and admiring the mysterious manner in which each in-

sect moves in unison with the rest, when a painful incident occurred. The quadrille, or whatever it was, got down too near the water, noting which, a bold, fearless fish leaped upward and carried away the master of the ceremonies. I was upon that trout's track in an instant. I dropped my fly with admirable precision a couple of inches above his nose, and allowed it to gently float over him. He dashed at it like a tiger, and the next moment, by a rapid upward motion, I struck him. Now, had he been a personable fish, my action would have firmly hooked him, after which I should have proceeded to play him as treatises on the art direct; but he was not an important trout in any sense of the word, and when I struck him he flew out of the stream over my head, as though he had been a flying-fish, and ultimately got himself and my gear entangled with a furze-bush, quite fifteen yards inland.

I have now caught a trout; and if, as I am well assured, the smallest fish are sweetest, there lies before me a dish fit for the gods.

And here a scene so romantic, so mystical, so unparalleled in its theatrical effect, befell me, that I am constrained to cast it dramatically. It almost amounted to a short miracle-play, and I shall thus treat it. I was wondering whether such a singularly minute trout as this might justly be deemed fair game, when, from the glorious after-glow of the evening, there appeared a radiant figure and stood beside me, and from the dark shadows that now began to creep out of approaching night, a gloomy

form arose and took his place upon my left hand. Then was enacted :

LIFE OR DEATH?

A one act drama, of which the dramatis personæ were :

A GOOD ANGEL.

A BAD ANGEL.

AN ANGLER.

A YOUNG TROUT.

The characters are all assembled on the bank of a Dartmoor stream ; the trout is lying quite out of his element in the foreground.

GOOD ANGEL. It's too ridiculous. Who ever heard of keeping a trout that size ? Let me beg of you to put it back without delay.

BAD ANGEL. Do nothing of the kind. Keep it. The fish is yours, honestly come by. Providence has delivered this trout into your hand. If you reject the gift, Providence will be very much annoyed and probably prevent you from getting any more.

GOOD ANGEL. On the contrary. Providence made you catch this fish in order to try you. Put it back at once, and you will be handsomely rewarded.

BAD ANGEL. Why put it back ? It was caught in the fair way of sport. It is not a bad trout, as trout run in this stream ; and the smallest fish are sweetest.

THE ANGLER. Hear, hear.

GOOD ANGEL. Only up to a certain point. This trout is absolutely immature. It becomes sheer cruel-

ty in such a case to keep it. Look at the poor little creature gasping out its life.

BAD ANGEL. There you go: trying to get sentiment into the argument. Be logical, if you can.

GOOD ANGEL. You are a fine one to talk about logic! What's the logic of killing an undersized creature like this?

BAD ANGEL. Logic and sport have nothing in common. You're no sportsman, anyhow.

GOOD ANGEL. The less you say about sport the better.

BAD ANGEL. Oh, go along with you—I can't talk to *you*.

GOOD ANGEL. That's right: lose your temper!

THE ANGLER. Order! This is merely a matter of opinion—nothing to get cross about that I can see.

THE YOUNG TROUT. If I may be permitted to—

BAD ANGEL (*interrupting*). Order! Order! you've no voice in the matter at all.

THE YOUNG TROUT. I admit it. I neither wish to influence the decision nor join in the discussion; but as I am extremely unwell and shall be as dead as a door-nail in about half a minute, I would venture to suggest that some conclusion be arrived at as soon as possible.

GOOD ANGEL. I appeal to you on behalf of this fish, first as man, secondly as a lover of justice and reason, thirdly—

(*Loud cries of "Divide" from the BAD ANGEL and the TROUT.*)

THE ANGLER (*taking up trout*). Bright spirit, you

have conquered. Without congratulating you particularly on your powers as a debater, I nevertheless am bound to confess there is reason and sense in your argument. Behold! I return this totally inadequate fish to its native element, trusting that it will henceforth do its best to acquire size and flavor against my next visit.

(THE TROUT is flung back into the stream. It floats, in two minds whether to live or die. Finally it determines to live. GOOD ANGEL flaps joyfully and vanishes; BAD ANGEL also disappears, using language that he may regret in a cooler moment, if he ever has one. ANGLER stands in statuesque position, tilts his hat over his eyes, and scratches the back of his head.)

TABLEAU!

Up to the present time this is the most remarkable experience I have had on Dartmoor. I hardly know what to make of it. If there is to be a scene of this nature over every fish I catch, upon my soul I doubt if it is worth while going on. A few moments later, however, my fears and disquietude vanish in a new series of incidents—incidents tending to prove that I had done well to obey the Good Angel.

I proceeded with my fishing, after getting the line clear and the flies dry and comfortable. I had not made above a dozen more casts or so when a second trout erred in its estimate of my "blue upright," and as a result of this mistaken judgment found it-

self in new and strange surroundings. Long before I could put my hand upon it in the now increasing darkness, I heard it gnashing its teeth, and tearing up the herbage, and striking the ground with repeated blows of its sinewy tail. I grabbed this fish and got it into my creel, under a load of grass and nettles, before there was any time for a supernatural manifestation. I went on fishing coolly and whistling, as though I had not just secured a splendid trout, and it all passed off quietly and there was nothing said. I measured the trout on returning to the lodgings, and I am scarcely exaggerating at all when I say that it was only just a shade short of four and a quarter inches long from nose to tail. Soon after this capture I met the Doctor, and we reluctantly determined to postpone further sport until next morning.

The Doctor's adventures had scarcely been as remarkable as my own. To me, listening with every disposition to be friendly and interested, an undercurrent of prevarication seemed to be woven into them. It may have been because he was excited and did not pick his words as carefully as usual; it may have been that his success had temporarily deranged him; but for some cause, hidden from me, my brother entered upon a narrative that, in the very pith of it, outraged all the laws of Nature. I may as well say at once that he had caught four trout—two considerably longer, from nose to tail, than mine; but it was in his description of a monstrous scene with a fifth that he appeared in such an unfavorable light.

This alleged trout had got off the hook too soon. Instead, however, of falling back into the water as one would have expected it to do, the Doctor solemnly declared that it had descended into a strip of rank grass, and that he had hunted it like a rabbit for five-and-twenty yards. He said that it kept doubling on him and leaping through his fingers and jumping over his boots, and, in fact, going on as never a trout did yet before. In the end I was desired to believe that this fish turned a sort of double somersault into some blackberry bushes and was no more seen.

Now, without a particle of ill-feeling towards the Doctor, I am bound to regard him as the unconscious mouth-piece of a falsehood. I will not accept this statement. He is going too fast and too far. These are the kind of experiences that men get who have fished for years—not beginners. At this rate, by the time he has been angling for a fortnight he must become hopelessly unreliable, and may carry a system of careless speaking back into his practice and so ruin himself. He ought to be checked immediately, and I am the man to do it. I tried a delicate touch of sarcasm. I said :

“Yes, the trout is undoubtedly a tricky fish. I lost a beauty just before meeting you. He escaped out of my creel and dodged me round a hay-stack, and then climbed up a tree.”

The Doctor said :

“Ah, you were rather a fool not to wait for it. The fish must have come down sooner or later.

They cannot live beyond a certain time out of water."

We went back to supper, harboring just a shadow of mutual distrust and disgust, which it can only be hoped will not outlive the night.

A crowd of yokels were smoking and talking on the bridge as we returned. They congregate here every evening after their day's work is done.

"Any sport, maaster?" one asked of me.

"Not as good as I had hoped." This in a tone implying I had proposed catching six dozen, but was returning with some few less.

"Water be just right tū," said the yokel. I did not much like his manner or his tone of voice.

"There is nothing the matter with the water," I answered; "but they are not rising—evidently thunder in the air."

This assertion about thunder quieted the man. He said:

"Aye, very like, very like." And I was proceeding to overtake the Doctor when a miserable boy took the matter up.

"Varmer Beal have caught a proper sight of fish down long," he declared.

Where on earth is the boasted courtesy and politeness of these people? Was it good tact, was it delicate, to mention farmer Beal's success "down long" at that moment? I turned upon the boy, and said:

"If your statement is a fact, Mr. Beal has met exceptional good-fortune. What did he catch them with?"

"Rod'n line, same as you."

"Of course, my lad; I did not imagine he was shooting them with a fowling-piece. What fly did he use?"

"A worm."

A worm! Trout never rise to a worm. Why should they? The worm sinks to them. Anybody can catch fish with worms and gentles and paste and such things.

I rejoined the Doctor, and after giving orders that our trout should be served up for breakfast next day, we supped well off a beefsteak and mushrooms with fruit tart and local cheese.

CHAPTER IV.

SLEEP — COCK - CROWING — UNPLEASANT INCIDENT WITH A
LOOKING - GLASS — SUPERSTITION — THE DOCTOR HAS A
TRANCE — A GOLDEN MORNING — “MAN-TRAPS SET HERE”
—SPORT—THE LANDLADY’S CAT—DARTMOOR—A KEEPER
OF MANY WORDS—CONCERNING MISS LUCY LYNN.

My brother suggested, ere we retired for the night, that it would be a happy thing to get up at four next morning and have a try at the trout before breakfast. I thought five would be a more likely hour, or even six. But he explained that the early dawn was a time second to none in these cases, so we decided that the man who should first wake after half-past four must rouse the other. In order to do this with certainty, some method of communication between our respective apartments had to be thought upon. Such an arrangement proved easy, for, with a fishing-rod, we carried a string from my window to the Doctor’s. The earlier riser would pull this and awaken his sluggard relative.

For myself, at four o’clock my senses returned to me. Nothing could have been better managed. I had just handsome time to go to sleep again. But sleeping is one of those things that cannot be done for trying. I have struggled and toiled to go to sleep sometimes till I have completely worn myself out.

And the advice that is given you in the matter is not any use at all. People say, "Think of nothing." If you could do this, you might possibly gain the desired object, but I never met sane persons who could. If I try to think of nothing I think of everything, and have a perfect hurricane of ideas, and recall my past life, and the good deeds I have done, and the other deeds, and end by getting into a perspiration and becoming awake to an extent impossible to describe. There are, again, misguided persons who advise you to "Just shut your eyes and think of sheep jumping, one after the other, through a gap in a hedge." Now, for a reasonably inventive being, this is almost death. I have tried it, and solemnly declare it to be so. First you have to imagine a hedge. There are thousands of different kinds of hedges. Assume an ordinary, earthen hedge, with trees upon it, and ferns, and grass, and so forth. Any sort of a gap will do; then the sheep: say South Downs. Now they jump through the gap. Mine began well enough, but the tenth sheep slipped and fell; the eleventh caught his coat in a brier; the twelfth went down the hedge, and the thirteenth tried to get over it. Then all the machinery of a dog and a shepherd became necessary; and finally, I worked the thing into a considerable event, bristling with incident and adventure, full of local color and rustic dialect and touches of cynicism; and I became perfectly "played out," and finally had a nightmare that I hate to think of even now. But to sleep upon the morning I mention

was impossible. Nature would not permit me to do so for some time. A bantam began it; a Cochin China answered him; something else chimed in on the third challenge; and then another sort of cock took it up. The last was just beneath my window, and appeared to be laboring under some horrid bronchial disorder. I never heard such a mixture of asthma and bronchitis and defiance as he sent forth. None of the others answered him. They had not the heart to do so. It knocked all the spirit out of them, but roused mine. I sat up in bed and said aloud:

“This must not go on. I have come here for recreation and health and peace. These things are impossible within the radius of that crow.”

I then sank back, waiting nervously for a repetition; but the bird had either made a swan's end and expired in its own music, or else was employed upon some other matter. A pleasant revulsion of feeling ensued. Pigeons were cooing outside my window, but their mild matins beautifully soothed the senses, and I slept once more, not waking again until ten minutes to six. Then I hastened to my window, and pulled the cord of communication. There came no responsive pull. I tugged a second and third time with like result, and then gave a final jerk, upon which a terrible thing happened. The string slacked off and some heavy body fell into the garden beneath with a crash. My first fear was that the Doctor had tied the cord to himself, and that I had now pulled him out of the win-

dow in his sleep and so killed him. Uncertainty upon a question of such a sort was not to be supported. I looked out and found that I had fetched a looking-glass out of the Doctor's room, and it now lay below on a fern rockery, reduced to a chaos of splintered glass and fractured wood. If it had been falling out of some remote planet for years it could not have broken itself more completely.

There is very little superstition about me in a general way. I have sat down thirteen to dinner; I have spilled salt without flinging any over my left shoulder; I have brought the first bloom of a black-thorn into a house and never died; I have looked into a mirror after midnight and noticed nothing more weird than usual; I have seen a single magpie and flung a stone at it, thereby bringing greater annoyance to the bird than ever he brought to me—I have done much else of a kind to show my superiority to ignorant fable and vulgar belief; but I have not broken a looking-glass before; and I regret it, because, though I deny that the act will bring me bad fortune for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one years—the right duration I forget—yet there may be just enough in such an accident to ruin a fortnight's rest and holiday. I argued it out while I was dressing. I proved that the mere circumstance of breaking a looking-glass did not amount to much if you could prove that the fault was another's. The fault in this case must be laid upon the Doctor. His indescribable idiocy in fastening the string to the glass and leaving his window wide open, was re-

sponsible for all. By collateral argument I also implicated the owner of the glass, and finally convinced myself that such bad fortune as might ensue must fall in equal proportions upon him and my brother, leaving me with only my usual every-day miseries. Still the Doctor slept. I went into the garden, and began pitching stones into his window and shouting. The stones became larger and larger; some must have struck him. "This is not natural sleep," I thought. "Either a species of loathsome trance is upon him or he has died. If he is dead, there is an end of everything, of course; if not, it may be possible to save him. In either case he will keep until breakfast-time."

So I went quietly off to fish a while. The morning was very splendid. I crossed the stream where it ran by our orchard and meadow, and pushed forward through a wood of oaks above and hazel below, full of little watercourses where grew great wealth of fern and moss. The sun glinted old red gold through a thousand tangles of shrub and sapling. A dew of sparkling diamonds flashed and shone upon everything; gossamer threads caught the blaze of light also, and every leaf and spray and twig stood clear cut in air purer than crystal. Of animal life the wood was full. Rabbits shook the dust off their paws at me and bolted, their little scuts bobbing, on every side. There were also mice about, and a squirrel. I alarmed a woodpecker—not tapping, but preparing to do so. I also alarmed a jay; and then a pheasant alarmed me, for which

inhospitable act I would have slain him, though it was August, if I had had anything to do it with. I prowled onward, a sense of peace growing strong within me. My heart warmed to the birds and the conies, and even the mice, and all the other dumb, happy things that lived here. I envied them their simple sort of life; I even suspected, with sundry learned men, that consciousness is, after all, a horrible error on Nature's part: that a blackbird probably gets more all-round satisfaction out of its life than a man. Then it struck me that I was calmly indulging in an advanced conceit of pessimism, further than which it would be difficult to go. Banishing reflection, therefore, I just gloried in the superficial beauty of sight and sound investing this pleasant morn, and endeavored to develop a childlike spirit, which they tell me is the best for general purposes if your object be the acquiring of information. I began acquiring information very rapidly. A comely, ancient tree afforded some of the most startling nature. Upon its trunk were nailed boards conveying facts about man-traps, and implying that they, supported by spring-guns, were set at a venture in this identical wood.

I knew that these dastardly engines had been abolished for years; I was also aware that to plant any such thing nowadays would outrage the law; and yet, so great is the force of a proclamation, and so possible did it then appear to me that a man-trap or two might still be lurking about, that I got from the neighborhood, and exercised some caution in the

doing of it. Man-traps knock the poetry out of a forest as quickly, perhaps, as anything. This incident somehow roused my sporting instincts, which till the present had slumbered. I recollected that I was here to kill fish, not pry and potter about in somebody else's game preserves. So I hastened to the river, which was at hand, and set to work. Soon afterwards I noticed another rod flashing down stream, and beheld, to my amazement, the Doctor intent on angling, and apparently doing so to perfection.

If he has had a trance, it is clear the fit must have passed off; on the other hand, if he is really dead, which was the alternative, this would appear to be his spectre. In that case his spectre has just caught a fish, which I must see, though the vision blast me for my temerity. I hastened forward, and was in at the death. The Doctor said:

"Good-morning, old chap. Need not ask you how you slept. I didn't wake before five myself, then I got up and pulled the cord and hammered the wall, and went on agitating until a baby began to cry somewhere. I gave it up after that, and came out alone. Any sport?"

"One looking-glass," I said, and then went on to explain what a thing had been done that morning, and how entirely he was to blame. He did not show much emotion about the affair, but I fancy he felt it more than he led me to suppose. He said that in future we had better each go our own sweet way, and have no tomfoolery about signals and alarms

and communications. He then changed the subject, and announced that he had caught three trout, all exactly the same size, with a very nice little gray, yellow-bodied fly that his landlord at the inn had made him a present of on the preceding night. I can see that this landlord is giving the Doctor a very unfair advantage over me. These small publicans are sportsmen to the backbone, and full of most valuable information about trout-fishing. My landlord is a past-master in the art of shunting railway-trucks, but does not know a trout from a turbot. I pointed this out, and the Doctor allowed the cogency of it, and promised that in future any wrinkles likely to prove useful should be shared freely and frankly with me from the first. I, on my part, undertook to write that very day to London for a supply of these gray-and-yellow flies, of which I made no question that my friend at the shop possessed good store.

We fished together in a brotherly, peaceable way for half an hour or so, and I caught a really considerable trout that wanted most careful management and a landing-net. The Doctor said there was no necessity for a landing-net. He declared that if he had hooked the fish he should not have dreamed of standing there fussing over it for five minutes, but just lifted it out and had done with it. This is, I am afraid, a little bit of jealousy. I may be wrong, but I think so. My own opinion is that if he had in reality captured such a trout as this, he would have lost his nerve altogether, and very possibly

failed to land it and got tangled up in the scenery, and jumped into the water himself, and shown none of my coolness and experience.

The hour then being eight we prepared to return, for it was our intention to travel afield after breakfast to a stream much praised by the guide-book, and distant about five miles.

The wasps had already begun our morning meal. It is odd that I have made no mention of them before. They afford me infinite uneasiness at all hours, but especially when we eat. The wasps here are both savage and short-tempered. I was killing one with a fork, and it got loose and flew up and stung me on the nose, and then buzzed off out of the window as if it had done something clever. Probably it spread a gasconading report among its friends as to how I had attacked it and struck it down, and how it had risen to the occasion, and stung me and left me for dead on the field. The Doctor says that if you only keep quiet and don't worry them they will do no harm. That is the policy usually adopted with ill-tempered people. But it must be a mistake, because if everybody gives way before them they never get opportunities for self-control, which is just what they want to make men of them. I regard it as kinder to have differences with these touchy folks from time to time. With wasps, in the same way, it is a mistake to be yielding. They don't appreciate it or admire you for it. The safest plan is to kill them when they are sitting; but make sure of them, because they

are the most revengeful things in nature, and never forgive. My brother, generally a firm man, is weak to childishness about wasps. He permits them to walk round his plate and watch him dine or take breakfast. Some of these mornings he will eat one by mistake; and it is much worse to be stung inside by a wasp than outside.

When our trout came to be uncovered at breakfast, the Doctor and I exchanged glances of ill-concealed dismay. There were but four on the dish, and we had caught five. We counted them over carefully; there was not a doubt about it. The landlady herself waited upon us. She made no excuse, but admitted a fish was missing, and added that it had been a better and finer one than these. She declared her cat selected it for private consumption while they were being prepared for table.

The Doctor said:

“Let the cat be sent for.”

The landlady went out and caught the cat, and left it with us to explain as best it might. I had at first feared that Mrs. Vallack invented the story about her cat to screen somebody of more importance; but one glance at the animal convinced me he had not been belied. He was a shabby tom, with yellow eyes and no tail worthy of the name. To see this hardened rascal pretending to be shy and innocent and guileless was disgusting. He did not attempt any explanation, but crept beneath a sofa and kept peeping out in a kitten-like fashion. Then the Doctor went under the sofa after him, and brought

him forward by the neck, and sat him down on a chair, and lectured him.

Soon the cat came out in his true colors, and put on an old offender, don't-care-a-straw, do-it-again-to-morrow sort of expression.

"Are you ashamed of yourself, or are you not?" began the Doctor.

The cat scratched his ear, and made no answer.

"Do you know what will be the end of you if you take other people's trout?"

The cat looked bored, and smothered a yawn.

"You are an English cat. Do not pretend you don't understand me."

The cat put up his nose, and sniffed the sweet odor of cooked trout.

"Ah, you prefer them cooked, do you?"

The cat began to assume the most fulsome admiration for my brother. He got down off his chair, and flung himself at the Doctor's feet, and purred and gazed up with eyes full of humble regard.

"There are but four trout, thanks to you; and these have been already eaten. You have nobody but yourself to blame."

The cat implied that tails or bones or anything were good enough for him, and became so entirely amenable that he got what he wanted, and had it all his own way. He then washed his face and prepared to leave us.

"We sup at nine," said the Doctor.

The cat turned round and nodded, and went off.

Our five-mile walk to the regular business of the day was then undertaken.

Dartmoor can show a variety of scene unequalled. There are hills capped with ragged tors and strewn from base to crown with bowlders great and small; there are other hills, round and brown and destitute of stone or tree to break their monotony. These latter appear of heavy peat soil, whereon grow grasses and bog heath and little else, while the former are granite at heart, but much more beautiful to look upon. Around their towering sides a battle-royal rages between Man's ploughshare and pruning-hook. and Nature's barbaric wealth of brake-fern and bramble, stunted oak and thorn, silver-birch and mountain-ash, with iron granite in the van beneath its coat of ivy. Arable land, from a Devon farmer's point of view, is of a character to make other agriculturists wonder much. Where the great bowlders can be removed, they are; where such a course is impossible, the plough goes round them, and the high-lying fields are oftentimes liberally dotted with blocks of stone. In the valleys every lane and tangled hedge-row is bursting with ruddy wealth of rich earth that seems the very heart's blood of Nature; above, on the moors, the roads are often of small flint—white and shining. They are fringed with pink heather and grouse heather and golden furze; which roads and their surroundings, to catch against a background of blue sky, forms a glorious vision of color. 'Tis a great, free, lonely world, that in sunlight or moonlight, gray mist or flying breeze, winter

or summer, must ever be a dear sight for eyes that love Nature unadorned. In our ears tinkle the notes of a sheep-bell, jangling wild music as the flock follows the bell-wether across a mountain-side; in our eyes is reflected a God-painted panorama of wooded valleys, with granite and heather-clad heights above them and purple hills beyond. To the right and to the left silver rivers are gleaming and winding their courses through meadow-land and forest. There are also to be seen, far below, white-walled homesteads in sheltered nooks, with pasture, fallow, orchard, and fields of waving corn ripe for the harvest. The western wind was fresh, and cast shadows from a flying cloudland across dell and fell and rainbow moor, thus affording much noble play of light and shade to make all things perfect.

The Doctor said that if operations could be performed in this atmosphere, the mortality of them would be greatly lessened. He discussed health and antiseptics generally, and I was about to blame him for thus dragging his profession in by the heels, as it were, when it struck me that his practical view of this sublime place was in reality more to be admired than my vague admiration. He humanely regretted that the natural possibilities of the moorland could not be utilized for the welfare of sick and suffering; I had sucked in the pure life-giving air and enjoyed it, and never thought how many thousand pairs of lungs wanted it more than mine.

As we neared our stream and passed a lonely cot in a hollow, we heard wailings and lamentations, and

came across three women in a condition of great distress. Their menkind had gone away to work and left them forlorn. We inquired the nature of their trouble and learned with difficulty, for they were nearly incoherent in their grief, that the matter was all about a little ass. This animal had jammed his head between a stone gate-post and a wall; and they feared that he would die before rescue came. The ass seemed to be in a bad state. He had been kicking to free himself, thereby becoming more firmly wedged than ever. He was quite exhausted and in a condition of complete collapse. I thought he must be passing away, but the Doctor felt more cheerful about him, and set to work to pull the wall down. We labored zealously, and the women blessed us, and dried their eyes when my brother declared no harm had been done. They said that the ass possessed most exceptional qualities, and was greatly loved by all who knew him. Finally, we freed the beast, whereat he plucked up spirit, drank half a pail of water, and showed gratitude.

Save that we began to handle our rods with increased skill, this day was singularly uneventful. We captured in all some three dozen fish of varying sizes, and, towards evening, met a most communicative keeper, who apparently enjoyed so few opportunities of exchanging ideas with his fellow-men that he almost refused to leave us. He talked of his duties while he was thus neglecting them; he said that he had entire control of about thirty or forty miles of river; and that he and one other man

were practically the only water-keepers on Dartmoor. He told tremendous anecdotes of poachers, and explained that the scar which so adorned his brown cheek was given in an affray with these. He then went into the question of otters and otter-hounds, and hunting generally. He touched on the weather, in connection with which he mentioned some strange facts about floods. He then treated of the crops. He never fished himself, because he had no time. His business, he said, was always to be moving. He generally walked above thirty miles a day. He explained that the curious scar on his face had been produced by a flash of lightning, and described the storm in which that particular flash occurred at great length. He wished we had come a week earlier, because then the fishing was at its best, and some very good peel had been taken by a gentleman called General Lynn. His admiration for General Lynn lasted nearly a quarter of an hour. The Doctor gave him a cigar, which he put away in the lining of his hat. He explained that he never smoked while at work, but if we had a sandwich to spare—why, he did not mind just a nibble to keep his jaws from rusting out. He said his wife was a source of great pleasure to him, being as God-fearing and sober a woman as we should find on Dartmoor or Exmoor either. His children were numerous, and also satisfactory. The Conservators were thinking about raising his salary, but they had been thinking of this for three years, and he doubted if they would really do so for another three. Might he just enter our names, and

the number of our licenses in his little book? Now he should not have to trouble us again. He saw we were looking at the scar on his face. "Terrible bad business" that had been. A horse ran away with a new mechanical mowing-machine, and he had stopped it, and the mechanical mower nearly cut his head off. All in the day's work. He was a bit of a gardener himself in his leisure moments. A good few vegetables he grew—not broccoli, because broccoli took too much watching—but big cabbages that weighed three pounds apiece. He doubted if we should catch many more fish to-day: the setting sun looked to be angry. When the sun was drawing water of an afternoon, that was as good a time as any. He would have brought his new gun out to show us if he had known we took any interest in such things; but, maybe, he should meet us again. Then he returned to the scar, and entangled himself in his speech, and lastly got over a fence into a wood, saying that it would be raining fit to drown us in half an hour's time, and that he had still a trifle over ten miles to go before his round should be completed.

He was perfectly right about the rain. We had the dampest walk I ever remember to get home, and in our long white mackintoshes were mistaken, while traversing a field, for two ghostly apparitions, by a group of grown men who should have known much better.

The following fragment of conversation between the Doctor and myself, as we ploughed our way back

to Tavybridge, may be given with an added explanatory word or two.

“I wonder if that General Lynn is any relation?”

My brother asked the question, and I answered it.

“More than likely.”

Now this mysterious dialogue refers to a discovery made by the Doctor. He has observed sundry advertisements upon barn-doors and in shop-windows at Tavybridge, proclaiming the fact that an entertainment is to be given at the local school-room in a few days' time. The lady responsible for the management and organization of this concern is one Miss Lucy Lynn ; and, since he read her name in print, the Doctor has declared it to be the prettiest combination of words he ever met. She may be elderly, though it does not sound an elderly name ; she may be plain, though the Doctor doubts it very much ; she may be engaged, which is far more probable than the former suggestions ; but whatever her age, natural advantages, or private arrangements for a future of happiness, the Doctor has determined to get a sight of her at the pending performance. And as General Lynn, the doughty slayer of peel, may also be present, I promise to accompany my brother, for a sight of this great sportsman would do me a world of good.

CHAPTER V.

BELLS—THE RIVAL HONEY GROWERS—A REMARKABLE BARBER—MARTYRS—THE LANDLADY'S HOBBY—IGNORANCE OF THE LOCAL MEDICAL MAN—IT IS SHARED BY ME—A SLEEPY SYMPOSIUM—PHOTOGRAPHY—CONTEMPLATED BOOK FOR YOUNG ANGLERS—PECULIAR INTELLIGENCE OF CATTLE—A MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE DOCTOR AND THE SUN.

“WHEN it pays better to talk than listen, change your company.”

I took the liberty of saying this to the Doctor at breakfast next day. The reason for such a rebuke appeared in a statement of his. Overnight, before going to rest, he had visited the bar-parlor next door, and partaken of some sort of refreshment. While doing so, he explained to me that he talked at great length with many of the most ancient and representative inhabitants of Tavybridge; and he concluded by saying that, so taciturn were they, it was necessary for him to do all the conversation. Upon which I reproved him as aforesaid.

The great evening pastime here is bell-ringing. Every hostlery of any importance possesses an octave of hand-bells, and the different houses match their champions, while experts listen and judge; which competitions must be both interesting and beautiful—if you like bells. Four great champions came to

play to us one evening while we supped. Each held two bells. They rang "touches" and "flourishes," and must have been getting on to a right peal of "grandsire triples," if such a thing is possible on hand-bells, before they stopped. Their music was soft and sweet, and sounded like chimes from a far distant steeple.

This morning, being a red-hot August one, we loitered about and investigated Tavybridge, and put off any further slaying of trout till sunset.

The Post-office is very interesting here. They sell stamps and post-cards, and other things one would expect to buy, but the principal industry of the place is honey.

I had a lengthy conversation with the Post-mistress, who told me that her husband spent considerably more time among his bees than was, strictly speaking, right or proper.

"However, 'tis wonderful fine honey, sure enough," she said. "There's none like it in these parts: white clover honey, clear as amber, all in the comb, and only a shillin' a pound."

She showed me some in neat little cases, and I bought largely, proposing to take home great quantities of it.

"If you go over the way," she said, pointing to the pocket Whiteley's, "they'll give you a handy soap-box you can pack it in."

I observed a malicious twinkle in her eye as she made this remark, but did not realize until some few moments later to what it alluded.

At the General Dealer's establishment I inquired for a neat box to pack honey in. An ancient and withered dame, "with a face like a rebec," attended on me.

"Oh ! you 'ave comed to the place for 'oney," she began. "My son, what's in a consumption of 'is lungs, God rest 'im, grows the finest and purest 'oney in Devon. If you're minded to see the silver medals 'e've took, you can. Yes, you 'ave comed to the right place for 'oney, sir."

"The question is : have I come to the right place for a soap-box?" I said. "My honey has already been purchased at the Post-office."

The old woman was bitterly disappointed. It appeared I had been deceived at the rival establishment.

"They certainly led me to understand that white clover Post-office honey was the best," I explained.

In answer, she spoke very disrespectfully of the Post-office honey, implying that it was poisonous and quite unfit for human food. This is worse than those bees of Trebizond, which, from a certain rhododendron, manufacture honey that sends the eater of it mad. I grow reasonably alarmed, and have evidently chanced upon a great and bitter feud between two equally important honey growers. I suspect the very rival bees, when they meet, disparage one another's efforts, and sneer and keep up a party spirit. In common fairness I was bound to buy more honey here, and while doing so told the vender that I should eat of both brands and con-

clude justly between them. She urged me not to go and fling my life away experimenting on white clover honey. Her son's bees had received a proper education, and manufactured their luscious wares from nothing but prime lavender or sweet wild thyme. I promised to make my investigations scientifically, and mentioned that a medical man was of my party, a learned being who would doubtless be able to analyze the respective honeys, and thoroughly gauge their properties. But come what might, the soap-boxes appeared to be quite perfect of their kind.

My next experience was at the village barber's shop. This man I regarded as quite thrown away in Tavybridge. He had all the audacity and assertiveness of London hair-cutters. I was an infant in his hands. He thrust his cloth between my throat and collar, then chose a pair of scissors, began snick, snick, snicking about in the air with them, and made rough general calculations of my head with a comb. He gave a sort of lecture as he went along, the subject being heads of hair, my own in particular. He was good enough to think mine rather an interesting head.

He remarked:

"You never put grease on, I can see as much at a glance."

I answered that I never did, believing, from his manner, that he would commend me for such self-denial. But, on the contrary, he declared that I was wrong not to do so. What my hair needed was tone.

I had sufficient hair, but it lacked all tone. He stopped cutting to assure me that nothing was so bad as cold water applied to hair. It produced baldness, and if I persisted in using water, my hair was just the kind to wither away and drop out by the roots. He inquired my age, and, on learning it, solemnly prophesied that at thirty, or sooner, I should be as bald as a phrenologist's bust.

I said :

"I want my hair cut, not criticised."

This checked him, but he burst out again almost immediately :

"Here's a very weak spot over the ear," he announced ; "a very weak spot indeed. You must be singed."

I refused. I said :

"Not this morning : I am busy. Another day I will drop in and you shall singe me, and shave me, and curl me, and shampoo me, and make experiments, and do just whatever you please with me. But not now."

He insisted. He declared that singeing was his strong point. It would take rather less than no time. The masterful creature lighted a taper and had already singed my ear before I could protest. It was a trying experience. I doubt if he had ever singed anybody in his life before. I felt to be cooking. I could hear myself frizzling and getting brown. The executioner seemed a sort of cannibal *chef*, putting final touches to a centre-piece. He would probably place a lemon in my mouth pres-

ently, and arrange bay or laurel leaves round me. I never before realized what martyrs at the stake must have had to put up with. I should not have done the smallest practical good in this direction; and I doubt if, among all my friends and acquaintances, there is one who would make a passable martyr. Men deteriorate fast along certain lines. Does Faith make fools and Reason make cowards? Or is there a half truth only in that suggestion? Has the quality which went to produce martyrs vanished before the spread of education? Or is it that a supply has only ceased with the demand?

I answer "Yes" emphatically to the last question. The Cause is everything. Let men be satisfied of the Cause; let them march under a banner that symbolizes Right; and name the banner Religion, Science, Ethics, what you will, there shall still be found martyrs in the land, there shall still be found noble hearts with noble music in them, though the changes and chances of life may never require that the music need be uttered.

The barber charged London prices—to me. He said that if my head was in his hands for a month or two, I should hardly know it; he would improve it so wonderfully. I told him that I had been trying to improve it myself for years.

He answered:

"Yes, the inside, sir; but it is the outside of a head a man is most often judged by."

I hope this is not the case. If so, hair-dressers must be allowed a much more important position in

the social and philosophical order of things than is, I fancy, granted to them.

Justice has not yet been done to Mrs. Vallack, our landlady; and as this promises to be a somewhat desultory chapter, the calm, in fact, before a storm, I may here make mention of her as she deserves. Her tastes lie in the direction of the profound, and her favorite subject is the end of the world. She knows more about this than anybody I ever met, and talks most interestingly concerning it. Where she got so much information I am at a loss to understand. I asked her, and she replied that every day had its own signs and wonders, if persons kept their eyes open and judged rightly of what they saw. For her own part, she explained, she had always been religious and came from a most religious stock. She added that the subject of the final climax was a most simple one; all a body had to do was to put two and two together in a prayerful spirit. But, surely, two and two put together—no matter if the spirit be prayerful or profane—can only make four, not the end of the world? She had fixed the date and the hour, but would not divulge them to me. Her husband knows, however; I may be able to get it out of him. She told me that she had been mercifully permitted to learn these facts, but could not make them public. I shall watch her, because, if the end of the world comes while we are here, she is certain to be a little fidgety and *distrain* the morning before. If I notice anything of the kind in her, I shall make a will and

put my affairs in order, and get the Doctor into a decent frame of mind, too—if I can.

He had come in to lunch before I got back, and appeared considerably exercised about something. It proved to be a professional question. During his morning walk he chanced upon a child in a state of illness, and he now told me that there was very little doubt the local practitioner was killing it. The Doctor said :

“He is treating it for a-myo-trophic lateral sclerosis.”

I said :

“Monstrous ! As if any young child could get such a big disease as that. Why, it would be all an adult could do to survive it. Can you not go to the local man and creep into his affections and gradually become so friendly that you might tell him, if even in a parable, what a fool he is making of himself ?”

The Doctor replied that professional etiquette rendered it impossible for him to say a word even in a parable, though the result of his silence might be death to the child.

I asked :

“What is the unhappy infant suffering from in your opinion ?”

The Doctor answered :

“Acute anterior polio-myelitis.”

I said :

“Poor, poor babe. Better it should die than linger on dragging an ailment of that kind about. It

is the saddest case I have ever heard of. Can it be that you are both mistaken, you doctors? Perhaps, after all, the hapless infant has only been eating too many blackberries or some juvenile indiscretion of that sort. If you should be right in your suspicion, however, is it infectious? I came down here to catch trout, not polio-myelitis; and though I should doubtless suffer with fortitude, did the worst come to the worst, yet I do not like the sound of it; and, candidly, if there is much of it about, I think the sooner we are off the better for us."

The Doctor told me not to alarm myself; I was perfectly safe. He added that my remarks showed great ignorance, and that it was marvellous how little the public knew of his profession. To which I retorted by giving him this story:

An old man was at the point of death. His great wealth enabled him to employ six medical men, and they were forever meeting and wrangling, and advancing their individual theories. Somebody sympathized with the sufferer, but he answered: "Let them talk; it keeps them away from me. If they arrive at any conclusion, call in somebody else at once." Time went on, nothing was done, so Nature had a free hand and got the old fellow round. That is how it came to be admitted that, in serious cases, it is better to have two medical men than one.

Having done with lunch, we wandered by the brook, and sat us down on mossy islands of stone, under a golden-green rustling canopy of oak foliage, full of sunlight. Here we smoked, and ate the

lotus, and indulged in a sort of sleepy symposium, one firing off a question, and the other answering it. But the interchange of ideas became more and more irregular until it ceased. There was a calm for some moments; then I heard a fall and a splash, and awoke and found that I had dropped into the stream, which discovery astounded me to such a degree that I should probably have drowned, though the water was scarce a foot deep, had not the Doctor, from the security of his rock, directed me how to act.

We spent fully three hours in this pleasant spot, discussing all the important questions of the day, and many unimportant matters also.

My brother said:

"Talking of observation, you know how young children, when intellect dawns with them, begin to 'take notice.' You know how they poke holes in things, and eat any concern capable of being eaten; how puzzled ghosts of smiles flit over their inane little faces; how laughter at length has a part of their waking hours—sharing the same with tears and suction. Now, why is it that nine human beings out of ten stop this business of taking notice too soon?"

"Nobody really stops; it is impossible," I declared.

"They do, though," went on the Doctor. "People get a certain amount of experience and knowledge, and there they stick. They won't be hospitable to new ideas that come modestly knocking, but

either tell them they have no spare room, or invite them to call again, when they may not be so busy."

I replied :

"You see it is dangerous hospitality sometimes, this harboring of novel ideas. One hears of such horrible atrocities, that timid folks get frightened of trusting a mysterious stranger in their brain-pans. Suppose, for instance, you take in a civil-spoken, innocent-looking notion, introduce him to all your own pet, highly-domesticated ideas, and tell them to love one another, and run about and play together and be good. This was what Jones did. Mark the sequel. He turned his back for a moment, and the new-comer got foothold, and grew, and made himself at home. Then, like the Red Indian he was at heart, that fresh idea fell tooth-and-nail upon the tame, happy family into which he had been introduced. He screamed and danced a war-dance, and scalped and murdered on every side. Next time Jones had occasion to employ a certain well-worn old sentiment, that had often served him nobly in the past, he called it by name, but received no answer. He hunted through his mental machinery for it, and at length came upon a scene of bewildering carnage and horror. There lay his dear old conviction, together with twenty others, dead and stiff, and weltering in gore."

The Doctor said :

"A pity we don't see more of that sort of thing. People who change their minds from time to time

at any rate get brain circulation and intellectual breadth."

I answered :

"Many men have to choose between living an abstract life, full of philosophy and books, and a concrete one, full of a wife and family and bills. Some few there are who can beautifully blend these varying interests, but the average toiler on this earth, who has to devote the bulk of his life to keeping food within him and a roof above, must not be blamed for filling his scanty hours of leisure as he pleases. One man loves books and study and progress, and all that modern thought can teach him. He burns midnight oil, and crams himself with ideas, and so finds life worth living. Another loves muffins in the fender, and a child to welcome him, and a woman to worship him when the day's work is done. Home is the watchword that makes life worth living to him; he too, perhaps, burns midnight oil, and crams—not himself with ideas—but the baby out of a pap-boat. Both these men are right, both are learning and getting the knowledge they want. A long family teaches a man more than most books will; and every station in life must breed its own atmosphere of ideas."

"You don't pretend to assert that people keep their eyes as wide open as they ought to, I suppose?" inquired the Doctor.

"Probably not, as a rule," I said; "though the man who knows when to shut his eyes is rarer than the man who knows when to open them. Much

might be written on the great art of shutting eyes. You are, of course, right in saying that adults often fail to use their senses and observation, that they either bustle or loiter through life, seeing but not perceiving, hearing but not learning. There is a good story apposite to this point—" and I told the Doctor what follows, which you may or may not have read before :

"A school-teacher was hammering the alphabet into a boy's head without much success. 'That's A,' said she. 'That's A,' he echoed, his mind on more important matters. 'That's B,' she continued. 'That's B,' he admitted, regarding a fly upon the window. 'That's C.' 'Yes; that's C.' He did not question the fact, being occupied in some engineering feats connected with an ink canal. Thus was the youth dragged through his letters until W arrived, and the procession had nearly ended. Here, for some obscure reason never to be known, the scholar woke up and began to take a gratifying and unparalleled interest in his task. 'That's W,' said the school-mistress, her own thoughts far enough away by this time. 'Bless me! Is it, teacher? That W? Whoever would have thought it?' And the infant gazed, round-eyed, as upon a revelation.

"Now, there is a text easy to preach on, if you have a mind to do so," I said to the Doctor.

"Easy enough," he answered. "Too many of us follow your lively boy. We overlook the amazing A, the beautiful B, the chivalrous C, and all the other marvels of that alphabet which school-mistress

Life tries to teach us, until we presently reach W. Thereupon, rushing madly for spectacles and eyeglasses, we exclaim, 'Good heavens; how remarkable! How exceedingly strange and instructive. That W? Whoever would have thought of such a thing? Well, we do live in a strange world, and no mistake.' We possibly add, in our excitement, something about keeping a sharp lookout for X, Y, and Z; but how much has been missed, and it may be too late to go back again."

Then we went in-doors to get a cup of tea, and found that a communication had arrived from London for me, full of gray-winged, yellow-bodied flies. The light being clear and the sky bright, my brother proposed trying some evening photographic effects while I fished. His powers in the direction of lens and camera have not as yet been mentioned, but they are great and varied. In addition to the ordinary apparatus, which, when the Doctor is holiday-making, always seems to follow him about like a huge tame grasshopper on three legs, he also possesses instantaneous processes, the secret of which it was long before I discovered. Chance at last put the key of the mystery into my hand. These lightning pictures are taken in a "Detective Camera." This is a sort of tin chest-protector, worn under the waistcoat and controlled by an arrangement that fits into some pocket. The lens peeps out through a button-hole, and does all its own focussing and so on. You may photograph a man to his face with this, and he will never know what is going on. Some-

times the shutter makes a snap like a mouse-trap when the string is pulled. If this happens, and people notice it and look suspiciously at the Doctor's watch-chain, he passes it off quickly by telling them that he has got heart-disease. In this strange machine he has already photographed many of the most picturesque inhabitants of Tavybridge; he has also made a series of pictures of me, angling. If these latter come out well, I shall probably use them to illustrate a little work, for novices, on the science of fly-fishing, which I propose to begin shortly. Pictures and diagrams often explain a thing better than pages of print. They who read this brochure will see at a glance how to throw a fly, how to stand, how to strike, how to land a fish, how to play one, how to lose one with good grace; and I may give a chapter about things to avoid doing, for there is a good style and a bad in fly-fishing, as in every other sport. Some of his pictures, if what the Doctor tells me is true, I shall not reproduce. No man can fish all day without occasionally finding himself in difficulties and misery. Flies will catch many matters besides trout. They will even turn upon their owner and catch him. They like to investigate the tops of trees, always on the farther bank. Again, there is nothing to prevent a sportsman from sitting down to lunch on an ants' nest. This I have done, and ants take an action of that sort badly. In my case they mustered their legions to destroy me; and I was engaged in a hand-to-hand fight with a squadron or so of them, which had got under everything

I was wearing at the time, when my brother thought proper to photograph the scene. A picture of that sort would only discourage young fishermen, and probably ruin my book financially. A sporting work should concern itself with the pleasures and keen triumphs and mighty possibilities of its subject, for these may be missed altogether by the tyro, whereas the reverse of the picture is sure to fall to his lot sooner or later; and a man does not want a book to tell him when he is in the deuce-and-all of a fix—his own instinct acquaints him with the fact in a moment. As to escaping from positions of trial and tribulation, there, again, it is idle to lay down hard and fast rules and regulations. No two men act quite similarly in a dangerous or critical situation. Luck often sides with pluck in a crisis, and I have before now seen a man keeping his nerve and doing the right thing, and being cautious, and making an awful mess of an affair, while another has “chanced it,” and gone in headlong and come out victorious, simply because that jade Fortune chose to favor him.

To return to my book, I might, of course, give a table of probable mishaps and casualties, with a few acute hints for plans of action, thus:

1. How to act if your fly gets hopelessly foul of a bramble-bush hanging over deep water: Fling stones at it. If there are no stones to be got, you must pull, and hope for the best.

2. How to demean yourself under attacks of wasps or cattle: In the first case, remember that the loathsome wasps want your lunch, not you; share it with

them at once, therefore. If you have lunched already, open your creel or bag in order that they may see you have done so. In the event of unruly cattle, don't stop to argue, for they have no logic, but get across to the other side of the river as quickly as possible. If you are not beforehand with them, it is ten to one that they will help you across. The judicious Hooker remarks: "It sometimes cometh to pass that the readiest way which a wise man hath to conquer is to fly." This holds undoubtedly here.

3. On the utter and hopeless losing of your way towards nightfall: Follow the stream in which you have been fishing. If necessary, follow it until it flows into the sea. Should no human habitation appear to reward your efforts, once on the shore, you may signal a passing vessel, and so get back to your friends. But there are simpler methods that will occur unsuggested.

4. How to know poisonous snakes: Don't know them; do not have anything to do with any snake whatever. The best are bad. If Adam had only given mother Eve that morsel of advice, how many unpleasant historical and contemporary concerns might have been escaped! But there—perhaps he *did* tell her. Women must talk; and probably no girl ever had so much to say, and so few people to say it to, as poor Eve. I don't for an instant suppose that she chatted with the serpent until she had fairly wearied every decent beast of the field to death with anecdotes about Adam and one thing and another.

The practical value of this book must, of course, largely depend upon the character and mental attri-

butes of those who read it. Many prefer to tackle their difficulties in their own way.

Talking of cattle, the oxen and steers and heifers and bullocks and kine generally and even calves here take an extraordinary interest in the Doctor and me, and in our fishing. They watch us and follow us with an evident enjoyment, that, had it appeared in human beings, would have been most gratifying, but which, merely manifested by dumb animals, becomes irritating and ridiculous. It strikes me, as I sit here writing in peace and safety, removed from the field of adventure by considerable tracts of country and of time, that among those lowing herds, and in addition to the oxen, heifers, and other varieties named, there may have been present *bulls* also. This did not occur to me before, and I am glad of it, because, though I do not fear a bull, as long as I can see the bull fears me, yet the knowledge of the near presence of such a thing might have flustered me occasionally, and caused me to fish with less delicate skill and accuracy than is my custom.

That evening I angled uneventfully, while the Doctor photographed and lost his temper because the sun would set in its usual quarter, instead of round the corner of an old mill, where he wanted it to set. He very nearly had an open breach with the sun about it; and if that ruddy orb had not vanished, so ending the matter, it is hard to say how such an affair would have gone. As it is, the Doctor may get a stroke to-morrow, if the sun happens to notice him and remember it.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAT ENTERTAINS—ANALYSIS OF FELINE CHARACTER—A SEA-SHELL—IN CLOUDLAND—BROWN AND GRAY HARMONIES—THE EXPERT—MY ABASEMENT—UNPARALLELED ADVENTURE INVOLVING HAM SANDWICHES—HIGHWAYMEN, HUMAN AND OTHERWISE—NATURE'S TRIALS—MY REAL WORK IN LIFE FRUSTRATED.

THIS night our landlady's cat gave a soirée in the garden. Every cat of any importance in the neighborhood must have been present. There was singing, with refreshments, dancing, flirting, and scandal-mongering. Some of the voices were powerful and good, though quite untrained. I could hear our cat organizing and issuing commands, and superintending everything. They kept it up very late. My contribution was a big sea-shell that graced the mantel-piece of my bedroom. I had no objection to the soloists, any more than I particularly mind the crying of one infant, but when it came to glees and comic songs with choruses, it appeared to me that the cats were rather overdoing it. So I sent forth the shell, recording thereby a vote of ostracism on the entire feline entertainment. Of course they did not take the hint.

Concerning all cats, there was a time when I liked them better, and thought more highly of them than

I do now. But I am convinced that very little can be said for them. They limit their horizons, they are supremely egotistical, they are intemperate. Their treachery is a household word, and of honesty they have no notion. Their private lives will not repay scrutiny, and the young have no respect for the old or regard for them. Their extreme cleanliness is quoted in their favor, but rake-hells and debauchees are notoriously particular and vain of their persons all the world over. Cats and civilized human beings are the only animals that swear effectively, and probably cats began it, if evolution is to count. Unlike mortals, however, a cat has all its bad language at command from infancy; it is born with a vocabulary comprising the vilest expletives and oaths; for from the mouths of even suckling cats, kittens in fact, I have heard language ill adapted to youth. Further, a cat is not really a tame animal. He only pretends tameness because he finds it pays him better in the affairs of life.

There was an unpleasantness about the sea-shell at breakfast. Mrs. Vallack came in and asked me for it. I told her how I had occasion to fling it into the garden. I volunteered to go out and look for it. She said that the matter was of no consequence, but her shell had a personal value, and was connected with many memories of her childhood's home. She asked me if I had treated a little china figure, that was wont to stand by the shell, in the same way. I said I rather feared that I had, and blamed myself bitterly. I could not understand how I came to do

such things. Who was I that I should bombard one person's cat with another person's bric-à-brac? The Doctor found the shell, and I found the image, both intact. We took them into the kitchen with triumph, and the landlady thanked us, though not heartily; while as to the recovered treasures, I never saw them again.

The cat was surly and grumpy, and bad company altogether that morning. I suspect he found that these lavish conversaziones run into more money than one bargains for. Or it may be that I struck some lady friend of his with the shell last night, and he had all the blame of it.

To-day the Doctor and I divide our forces. He is to fish over the old water where we met the keeper; I am to investigate a more remote river. Our guide-book explains that the Plymouth "leat" is drawn out of my new stream, and that above the spot where this body of water leaves it the river is naturally much bigger and the fishing better. Not that I am coming to care about big trout, or particularly want to catch them; but I intend sending some fish to town presently, and desire that these shall be more considerable in size than any yet taken. The men at my place of business know nothing about the smallest fish being sweetest, and would probably indulge in some low, cheap chaff, if I forwarded them a couple of dozen fair average mountain trout. I shall, therefore, humor their ignorance, and kill a big one or two for their especial benefit.

The day was dull and rainy. My road lay over

high, lonely country, across desolate moor, and among mountain peaks. Nature sang a sober monotone to me, and never a soul I saw for miles. The mist tracked my footsteps, creeping and curling and playing strange pranks, raising impalpable barriers on every side, anon breaking in ragged rifts where the tors thrust their heads through; and all the world was brown and gray. When the heavy vapors dispersed at unexpected moments, a savage, rugged region of granite-strewn hill-side, a bewildering chaos of weather-stained boulder, piled and scattered and rent as though by earthquake, was revealed. The moisture-laden atmosphere produced an optical condition of extreme clearness. Things appeared nearer than was in reality the case; every trifle of rock, stunted tree, or grazing sheep stood out distinctly and vividly. Then the misty curtain fell again, and from its cool, fresh depths there came the occasional jangle of a bell or a thud of hoofs, as the Dartmoor ponies raced, sure-footed, over their wild domain. And these were all the sounds I heard, save a hushed pattering of rain-drops from many boughs where I crossed the fringes of a coppice. Silent, immovable, peaceful, separated from its volcanic and glacial agonies by the span of unnumbered centuries, Dartmoor has still secrets in its heart, secrets of beauty, secrets of protean variety, of gleam and glow, of music and silence, for all who wander there. Each shall find something to his taste; each shall hear a soothing message if he but listen long enough; each shall feel the enchanter's wand touch his heart; for this

wild territory commands admiration and conquers the most stubborn and the most ill-furnished with a gift of Nature worship. But there are few who have not some little corner of Mother Earth treasured in their thoughts; surely very few who cannot conjure some happy, vanished scene, and sigh over it. After supreme moments of joy and sorrow, the unconsidered accidents of environment, overlooked at the time, will flash out, clear and bright from the memory, as photographs rise, like ghosts, from the plate. Sad and beautiful are those dreaming lands of distant recollection. Time softens their vivid outlines, mellows their crude intensity, creates of them a peaceful refuge for the thoughts of men, a dim Elysium where smiles and sorrows mingle, and the heart cares not to separate them.

A shaft of silver, feathered gray, had managed to tear its airy course downward through the dense, low clouds above. Presently another watery gleam broke through in a different direction; the mists began to thin at their edges, and fret their white hearts away into infinity. Then the weather slowly changed, till at length a glory of sunlight set ten thousand dew-drops glittering over a transformed world, burning with color rich and rare. Fragments of rainbow glimmered upon the fleeting vapors, and vanished; farther and farther apart the curtains rolled on every hand; the sun shone out of a blue sky; birds and insects and lizards innumerable, taking heart, came from their divers shelters to greet him; the dead moor lived again, and her shroud

sank into distant valleys ere it finally vanished before the ardent rebuke from above.

The river I am to fish winds through a broad plain, knee-deep in fern and undergrowth, lying between lofty, granite-crowned hills. Followed towards its source, the stream seems like to lead through a particularly wild and lonely region, where there may be much incident and adventure awaiting me.

I had put up my rod, adjusted the gear, and was about to make a preliminary cast, when a fisherman, in brown tweeds, and with a wide-awake air about him, sauntered towards me.

"Doing any good?" he asked.

"Doing myself good," I answered, evasively; but he would not be put off with this.

"Killed anything?"

I had not, as a matter of fact, taken life to-day; no wasp had even fallen to me.

I said, rather cleverly:

"Have you?"

"A tidy fish or two. Try a small 'March Brown.' You will find they fancy it."

I was about to give him a word of advice, assuring him that a "March Brown" would be absurd on such a day, when he, fortunately, interrupted me and invited me to see what he had caught. Now if an angler does this, he has probably enjoyed exceptional fortune. I approached him, therefore, with some curiosity. Heaven and Earth! the man was an expert, a master of his art. "Tidy!" His creel

contained huge monsters of the deep, old patriarchs of the stream, measuring twelve good inches, or even more, from nose to tail, and weighing I should fear to say what. I ought to have arrived here sooner; I am at least a day too late. He must have taken every big fish out of the river. I did not, of course, show all this admiration and excitement. I had no wish that the man should suppose I had never seen such trout before. I admitted they were "tidy," but abstained from gushing.

Then he said:

"There's a beauty a mile up stream, just a yard or so below a tree stump that hangs over the water. I couldn't touch him. He's rising, too."

"Ah, I'll see what I can do," I answered, cheerfully, in a tone implying that the big fish was as good as dead. "I'm only just starting," I added.

"A beginner, I expect."

How dense some men are. Of course, I did not mean that. I made no answer, but cast into the stream—a finished, perfect cast, which must show him plainer than any words of mine that I have fished for years.

He said:

"You won't catch anything there."

Won't I? Well I have; not a fish certainly, but some concern that refuses to leave the bottom of the river. I walked boldly in, to show him that I was no fireside fisherman, but one at least as courageous as himself, if not so fortunate.

He said:

"Wading is not allowed in this water. If the keeper sees you there he will make an awful row."

Then I came up on to dry land again, and yielded to the man's superior knowledge and skill. I threw myself on his generosity, and asked for some of his small "March Browns," and confessed that I was not an angler with any reputation or extensive experience.

He said :

"I thought you were one of the 'Chuck-and-chance-it' school the moment I saw you. You take too much interest in the scenery."

Instead of being annoyed at this remark, I felt gratified. The expert tells me that there exists a piscatorial school known as the "Chuck-and-chance-it." He furthermore adds that I belong to this school. I must be a typical "Chuck-and-chancer," because he recognized me for one in an instant. Such a reflection has its bright side ; because, if after less than a week's angling, I can thus take my place in the ranks of a widely-known class of fishermen, a time may yet come when I shall cease to be a "Chuck-and-chancer," and rise to those heights of scientific proficiency upon which this new acquaintance obviously stands.

He gave me some flies, and was very sportsman-like and pleasant. He said :

"Most annoying thing in the world. I have lost my lunch. It consisted of a neat packet of sandwiches. If you see any such packet, you will greatly oblige me by shouting down stream."

I promised to do so, should Fortune throw his

sandwiches in my way. I gave him the leg of a fowl and some salt in a piece of paper, just to keep the wolf from the door ; and so we parted under mutual obligations. I was determined to find the man's sandwiches if I could. I liked the idea of finding them. I pictured his glad smile on seeing the treasured and lost refreshment once again. My fishing, therefore, lacked finish and deadliness. I killed three trout, but the "March Brown" had really more to do with it than I. And then, by everything that was lucky, I actually came upon the sandwiches, lying on the top of a high bank above the river. They were in a neat white parcel, as foretold. I caught them up and hurried away down stream to rejoin their owner. I shouted, and even yelled, in my anxiety, but could get no response. I spent half-an-hour waking the echoes, and finally arrived at a spot miles below where I met the man. To hunt farther after him appeared useless. It was very disappointing. I looked at the sandwiches. They were ham ones. The expert must have been passionately fond of mustard. Now it chanced that my own lunch had been comparatively light, after the fowl's leg, already mentioned, was subtracted therefrom. It could not be particularly immoral, under the circumstances, to send these poor lost waifs after the meal I had already made. To cut a long story short, I ate the sandwiches, mustard and all, and felt the better for them. I then went up stream once more, fishing with very reasonable success.

I pushed rapidly forward, and at length came upon yet another angler. He was a stiff, solid little person, with a red complexion and white mustache. He had a severe frown on his face when I met him, and seemed exercised and wretched about some private concern.

"Any sport?" I inquired, heartily.

"Sport be hanged," he said; "I've lost my lunch."

Now this is a most extraordinary coincidence. Here are three fishermen met about the same stream, and two out of the three have lost their luncheons.

"You amaze me," I said.

"Ham sandwiches," he continued; "I put them down on the bank for half a second and they vanish."

I said:

"My dear sir, this is remarkable. You are the second man who has lost a packet of ham sandwiches on the desolate moor to-day. By the greatest good-luck I have already found one lunch that belonged to a man down stream; and if Providence will allow of my rescuing yours also I shall be indeed delighted."

He said:

"You may have found mine; let me see them."

This was an awkward turn for affairs to take, the more so because his suggestion came as a painful surprise.

I said:

"No, no; I am confident they belonged to a man down stream. He had plastered them with mustard; you wouldn't have liked them."

"They *were* mine," he declared, positively. "You must have taken them when I was under the bank getting some water. Lucky we met. Where are they? I want them."

I said:

“I will not tell you a falsehood. The simple fact is that I have eaten them. I would not have done such a thing for fifty pounds if I had known. I certainly thought they belonged to a man down stream.”

I never saw anybody get so angry in such a short time as that little fellow did then. He actually d——d the man down stream; he said he did not believe in him; he turned a ripe green fig color, and asked me how I dared to eat another person's lunch, and what business I had to do it.

I said:

"I did not regard the matter as business at all. It was a pleasure to me to eat them."

He used an expression that blistered the summer foliage within a radius of twenty yards.

He asked :

“And what am I going to do, I should like to know?”

I felt I could tell him the answer to that. It was a straightforward question only admitting of one reply.

I said :

"Go without, I should be afraid."

He was extremely rude. He told me I had committed a deliberate act of theft, and that he would

summon me for two pins. I answered that he might do so at the first opportunity if he had a mind to, and if he thought it would comfort him. I gave him my address, and insisted on his taking it. I demanded his in exchange, but he refused to give it up. Rarely have I endured such a scene of bitterness and recrimination. Hunger must have been gnawing his very vitals, otherwise he would never have permitted himself to say the things he did. I argued with him and tried to soothe him in vain. I offered him two teaspoonfuls of weak whiskey-and-water, which was all the nourishment of any description I had left. He consigned the fluid to a place where it is conceivable such stuff might command ready attention. I said that misery of this kind was merely transitory, and must be borne with fortitude. I advised him to grub about on the moor for whortleberries, or, failing them, to chew young grass or eat clay, a thing which savage races do in similar difficulties. I offered him a cigar. I said:

“Cheer up; there is yet another packet of juicy, good sandwiches knocking about somewhere.”

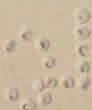
Thereupon, losing all semblance of human dignity and self-control, he plainly told me to go to the devil.

I was shocked and pained; I could scarcely believe my ears. I said:

“I sha’n’t hurry for you.”

He answered:

“Leave me, young man, or I shall forget myself.”



I told him that, to my mind, he had already done so. I got up onto a granite boulder where he could not reach me or offer violence, and pointed out his faults to him. I said :

“I have eaten your sandwiches and I regret it ; but such an accident might have happened to anybody. How was I to know they were yours? You should not leave things about in a lonely place like this. I blame you for losing your sandwiches, not myself ; and I blame you for losing your temper. I deeply deplore my part in the affair, but consider an apology is quite as much due to me from you, as from me to you. The man who can send a fellow-creature to the devil, upon the paltry pretext of having eaten a ham sandwich in error, is much to be pitied. Good-afternoon.”

I left him lashing the water and tearing his way through brambles by the river's brink. He was in no condition to fish, and not fit society for man or beast. I felt candidly sorry for him, but trusted I should never see him more. It would not much surprise me to hear that he has committed suicide. And all because I have eaten his lunch.

This painful incident robbed the day of its quiet peace and pleasure. I wandered on, fishing in a disheartened fashion, with every bit of joy and spirit knocked out of me. I shall never eat another ham sandwich ; and I shall never again give a man advice when he is in a rage. It was because I kept so cool that he grew so hot, I suppose. He felt he was in the wrong, and it simply maddened him to know that

I, with his lunch in me, stood there calm and collected, and pitied him, and regretted to see him making such an exhibition of himself. If I had lost my temper, too, we might, perhaps, have separated better friends. In a quarrel, when both the parties to it are bursting with indignation, the matter comes to some sort of conclusion pretty soon ; but if one man is cool and the other is not, there may be enough bitterness brewed to last a lifetime.

I fished on, and presently got a grand rise when I expected nothing of the kind, struck satisfactorily, and found I was fast in what must be a big trout. He was full of energy, and fought nobly for life, but Fortune favored me, and I experienced that blessed feeling of getting the net to bank with a heavy, live weight in it. This fish was the best thing I had done up to the present time. Its weight I had no opportunity of estimating until the evening ; its size would have fairly qualified it for a place in the expert's basket. I feel that I have been very clever to do this. My rod and I congratulate one another mutually. I am indeed glad that I selected this rod ; it fits my hand perfectly ; it almost seems part of myself ; I don't know what I should do without it. After catching a good fish, a beginner becomes all nerves and excitement to the tips of his toes, and works away as though life depended upon the efforts of the next ten minutes. I now found myself growing oblivious of all such mundane trifles as space and time. It was not until the sun had sunk in fire, and the defeated mists crawled from their hiding-

places to wind through the darkening twilight shadows, that I put up my invaluable rod and started for home.

Near the spot at which I finished operations for the day stood a weird triple gallows, from which hung the corpses of three moles. The people on Dartmoor are very unkind to moles. There is a price put upon their sleek little heads, and they live a life of difficulty and danger and sudden, painful adventure. For the matter of that a good many other creatures have reason to steer clear of the lord of creation. Weasels and stoats and owls and hawks and predatory cats all come to a bad end, and very horrible do their remains appear, nailed up for warning in some lonesome glen. But it may be doubted if the sight of a fellow-blackguard, hanging in chains on some lofty gibbet, ever really reformed a "gentleman of the road." Without speaking from experience, I should suspect that highway robbery was one of those exciting pursuits which grew on a man like drink. To show such a malefactor the reverse of the medal, the remote contingency which may be looming in the future, will have no particularly deterrent effect; for thieves are all born under a lucky star, from their own point of view, and none among them ever supposes he, personally, will be reached by the Law—until he is. Moreover, viewed from another standpoint, they are unconscionable fatalists, and their philosophy, therefore, could not permit them to feel any sickening from hempen fever, even though a brother should be dangling before them. But the

highway robbers of Nature have no opportunities for reformation. A sparrow-hawk cannot change his beak and his cruel eye, and live on pigeons' diet; a weasel has no power to go from his wickedness and emulate the harmless water-rat. "Nature, red in tooth and claw," represents part of the eternal order of things. Nature is so prodigal of life that the supply enormously exceeds the demand all the world over; that is, the supply of such life as could be dispensed with by man. There are too many human beings, for instance. Of course *you* could not be spared any more than I could; but I am sure we both know half a dozen fellow-creatures of our own sex who were really never much wanted. The fittest only survive, remember—a very gratifying reflection for people in good health and easy circumstances. But putting aside man and his influence and judgment as to what constitutes the fittest, we shall find that Nature's own favorites are too often the most disreputable fellows.

I should doubt if Nature gets much solid satisfaction out of man. I should be inclined to think she was rather afraid of him. He won't let her alone. He must have his spoke in her wheel, or rather have her a captive at his own chariot wheels; knocking down her mountains to build his habitations; damming her rivers; using her levin-brand to send private messages to his friends; advertising his pills on the bosom of her lakes; shooting her giant pets; planting his flag on her snowy brows; cutting her up; tearing her to pieces; dissecting her; libelling

her ; digging her heart out. She bears a great deal, but sometimes mortal insults are more than even Nature can tolerate, and she shakes her head and frowns. Whereupon the busy, industrious little men get blown up in volcanoes, or flattened under avalanches, or drowned by rivers and oceans, or choked underground, or buried in earthquakes, or slain with a subtle germ that turns half a continent into a church-yard. Nature can hit back very hard sometimes, and does do so. But we have no right to imagine ourselves her favorites, for, not contented with being by far the most disobedient of all her children, we develop ideas of our own, and dare to question her original designs. Modern man may like to regard himself as "a joy forever," but he is not "a thing of beauty," and Nature knows it.

Take an example : look at two pictures — say a Bengal tiger and a small tradesman. It is Sunday morning ; the tiger, in orange-tawny coat laced with black, and with a grand white shirt-front, sits licking his paws in his tangled, jungle-lair of sun-dried canes and rank grass. He blinks out at Nature from the corner of his great green eye, purs and smiles upon his mate and family. The small tradesman, in a top hat and other modern furniture, with a general atmosphere of creaking boots and pomatum about him, is going to church with his wife and offspring. They are right to go to church, but all their clothes torture the eye ; all their prayer-books have red edges and are unduly large ; all their neckties are of the primary colors.

You cannot blame Nature in putting the tiger before the small tradesman. Any artist would do so. Why, a tiger is a more beautiful thing than the most beautiful small tradesman in England. I never saw the small tradesman who could touch a tiger—or would, for the matter of that.

And as to tigers' cubs, I happen to know something about them myself. My life dawned in India, and on my third birthday, an infant tiger was given to me by a man who respected my parents and wanted to do them a good turn if he could. I loved the little tiger, and we faced life together bravely, and shared our bread and milk and biscuits and so forth for a fortnight. Then this cub began taking too much upon itself, and one day they found it trying to eat me. Of course man must interfere with the laws of Nature as usual. Nature had thought the thing out and arranged that I should make two meat meals for that cub. The animal was just beginning to feel its feet. Heredity reminded it that solid food would soon be desirable, and Nature pointed out how I might be regarded in that light. The whole business was ended ; everything seemed to fit in comfortably, and, without any conceit, I am tolerably certain I should have done that cub good. He would have grown to be an adult, man-eating tiger, and a great success and a credit both to Nature and to me. Then a native upset the entire scheme, knocked that beautiful, budding cub on the head, and carried me to my parents in triumph, they—poor misguided things—actually giving the local

heathen a reward. Who thinks of that cub now? But I have been reared and tamed and fussed over, and brought home to my native country and encouraged; attempts have been made in the past to educate me; I have been vaccinated, confirmed by a bishop, taken out to parties, and finally worked up to such an artificial pitch of perfection that I now sit here fearlessly writing a book, which shall be printed, and perhaps even purchased by the unwary.

But Nature never took any more interest in me. Nature knows that I ought to have been eaten by a tiger in the fourth year of my age. If I died to-morrow, even though two or three people sent wreaths and cards, Nature would not care a straw. Still she forgives her puppets at the last; and, perchance, when the wreaths withered away, and the few eyes that had grown dim for a moment were dry again, then Nature would drop just one tear, from which should spring sweet green things to hide up an ugly mound.

CHAPTER VII.

A SCIENTIFIC INVESTIGATION—THE VIOLENT FISHER—MY SPIDER—ON EARLY RISING—RECKLESS ASSERTIONS FROM THE DOCTOR—THE SHEEP, THE DOG, AND THE HIND—A SHORT CUT—THE DOCTOR'S POOL—ITS PECULIAR TENANTS.

It was, I think, the Merry Monarch who on one occasion asked his scientists and philosophers why a dead flatfish weighed heavier than a live one. They went into the matter, spent a vast deal of valuable time in experiment and investigation, and finally found that their sovereign had been mare's-nesting; for a flatfish, whether alive or dead, weighs exactly the same. Now, taking a line through trout, I believe if the aforesaid wise men had pushed their researches slightly further, they would have discovered that dead fishes weigh less than living ones. My great capture, mentioned in the preceding chapter of this record, certainly looked to be a pound fish when I took him from the water, but the landlady's scales declare that he is only three-quarters of a pound in weight. Whether the fault rests with the fish or the scales I am unable to say; and the fact of trout losing weight after death, though everything seems to point in that direction, cannot, therefore, be deemed absolutely proven as yet.

On renewing my acquaintance with the Doctor at supper, I found that he, too, had been successful. Numerically, indeed, he surpassed me, but his catch could show nothing to compare with my three-quarter pound king of the stream. He had met the keeper again, and had listened to a budget of private and confidential information through accidentally revealing his profession. On hearing that he was a medical man, the guardian of the river developed ailments of every description, and from being an exceptionally hale and robust individual, had begun to visibly pine away as he stood. He declared the scar on his face was caused by somebody dropping him into the fire when he was a child. The Doctor said that he gave him the idea of a man whose word could not be entirely relied upon. My brother then told me that he had discovered a wondrous pool below a series of rapids or "stickles." Here enormous numbers of trout congregated, and he himself had caught no less than four of them during his luncheon. I asked him if, by happy chance, he saw the modern Walton, General Lynn, but he answered that, of fellow-anglers, he met but one: a violent fisherman, who puffed and panted down mid-stream like a human steamboat, alarming the fish nearly out of the water, frightening the birds, irritating the insects, breaking branches off trees to steady himself, distorting the whole face of Nature.

"And all the time," said my brother, "he was whistling, 'See the conquering hero comes.' What

he had conquered I couldn't guess—certainly no trout with a grain of intellect.”

We smoked the peace pipe after supper, became sleepy to the verge of incoherence, and then, wishing one another well, wandered to bed.

This appears to be a good opening for my spider. I have been desiring to mention him for some time. He is as unlike ordinary country spiders as possible. I doubt if there are many London spiders even who could “best” him. He lives in a gray, cone-shaped web above my bedroom window, and catches simply everything that comes into the place, excepting myself. When I see some giddy fly gayly buzzing round this apartment, I laugh, and do not dash at it with a slipper as I should do under other conditions, but leave it to go its own way, and always know where to find it in the morning. My spider has a digestion of iron, and his activity and love of sport are such that he does not become gross and bloated like many of his race, but keeps in fine training, takes exercise of a night, and conducts himself like the sensible country-gentleman he is. By doing him a service, three days after my arrival here, I was able to secure his regard. A change of wind or other such cause made the flies desert my room altogether, and the spider, having used up his reserves, began to grow anxious. Two days passed. He had eaten nothing but a paltry gnat for forty-eight hours. I could see him moving about restlessly, looking out at the weather and getting sick at heart generally. On the third morning of his fast I went to see him

when I got up. He was sitting out in his door-way, haggard and pale and below par. The lurid light of hunger was in his eye ; if I had been a shade smaller he would have attacked me, and had a mouthful off me, or perished in the attempt. There is something about the sight of hunger that appeals to almost every heart. When we *hear* that thousands of fellow-creatures are starving, we sigh and deplore it and forget it all in the same breath, but if we *see* starvation going on under our eyes, I suppose we bustle about and try to be useful.

My spider said, in his own spidery way, "Look here, I've done a great deal for you in the matter of killing flies and other winged things that might have ruined your repose ; now is the time to show gratitude. I'm not merely hungry, but right down ravenous. Do, like a good fellow, have a look round on my account. Anything will serve : a blue-bottle for choice, but, bless your soul, I could eat a humblebee, I'm that scraped out."

"I'll see what I can do," I promised, and went down and just caught a wasp, hopelessly wrecked in some strawberry jam. The wasp would never be presentable again ; it must have taken its friends a week to polish it up, so I thought perhaps my spider might as well have it as not, and took the unhappy wasp up to his doom. My spider rushed upon him, hurried him off into his inner sanctum, and ate him, jam and all. That night the spider was himself once more. After dark I could hear him pattering round the room as usual, taking his regular exercise, and

squeaking, for all the world, like a mouse. In the morning the wind had changed and the flies returned, and he secured a daddy-long-legs and other lesser insects, and lived on the fat of the land—from his point of view—and got into easy circumstances again.

Since the beginning of my visit to Tavybridge I have risen with the lark—an action foreign to my nature. As a rule I very much dislike going to bed at night, and perfectly detest getting up again in the morning. Years of study in the matter of rising have enabled me to reduce the thing to a science, but it is a poor business with me at best. For good over-night resolves I should doubt if anybody ever rivalled me, but when the morning comes—say a dark, frosty one—my conduct is mean and despicable. Ideas and arguments and actions take some such form as this:

“Was that my hot water or was it not? I should judge from the light there is a fog. I will just take a look. Whew! properly cold this morning. A frost, I suppose; then there must be a fog; they nearly always go together. Dear me! no fog, but a hard frost. That is scientifically interesting. I must get back to bed for two minutes to think it out. Two minutes have gone and I don’t see any solution to it. Now then! Shall I shave or leave it until I get to town? Razors want setting, and there is a clear gain of ten minutes if I leave it. I will.” I do.

“Have the ten minutes gone, or only five of them? It must be five. Curious, I don’t feel in the least in-

clined to get up. What lies before me to-day? I will just run through those things that are to be done. What a number of things a man works into a day. But he always begins by getting up, of course. Well, here goes. I will just count ten and then bound out." I count accurately up to nine, twice.

"Now for it. What is the time, though? Surely not? Good! I cannot possibly catch my usual train without running; and running in weather like this is extremely bad for lungs. I might catch the next. But if I am two seconds late in my place of business, I get just the same amount of contumely and insult as if I was two hours behind time. I'm not feeling quite the thing, either. A man must humor his health. What d'you say? 'My hot water is almost cold out there, and breakfast is ready?' All right, I know. I'm going by a later train." I sleep again, and thus self-respect, honesty to employers, the religious teaching of my youth, propriety—everything is sacrificed. I rise, of course, sooner or later, and descend to my morning meal in a shamefaced fashion, and creep off to town, feeling that the abominable exhibition shall never be repeated. I have tried to reform and copy noble models, but it is beyond me. I once read of a lovely girl who invariably leaped out of bed the instant she was called—sometimes even before—threw open her casement window and buried her Grecian nose in the dewy roses that clustered outside. She was a marvel to get up. Chapter after chapter she bounded out in the same fashion. The author never mentioned whether she

dressed herself, or anything of that kind, but one gathered implicitly that she did do so, because the beautiful creature moved in the best society, and ultimately became a nun. Fired by this notable example, I determined to rise in the same way myself—just once, for experiment. Of course the girl had great advantages over me in many ways. Her nose was Grecian, for instance ; mine is a modern London or suburban nose, and nothing clusters outside my casement window but a cistern. I am not going to bury my nose in a cistern for anybody. However, for mere bounding out of bed, my facilities were well enough, and I expected to be successful. Now medical books will tell you that upon waking the first thing in the morning and getting on to his feet, a man finds himself unsteady and slightly top-heavy. This statement interested me a good deal when I first read it, because I had noticed the same fact the last thing at night in many people. Whether it was the matutinal shakiness above alluded to, or the wild excitement of getting up when I was called, or a condition of nervous tension produced by these two causes acting together, I cannot tell, but the result of my trial proved altogether unsatisfactory. On the words “Hot water” reaching my ear, I bounded. I bounded farther than I proposed bounding by about two yards. I bounded farther than there was room for me to bound. I bounded, in fact, into the fireplace, and lacerated my toes, and sprained my different joints and muscles, and went lame for a fortnight. Let kangaroos bound out of bed if

they will, but the lord of creation should crawl out—and if he does not fancy it when he is out, let him crawl back again. I shall be the last to blame him.

To return, I have mentioned my prowess in rising with the lark every morning since my arrival here; but to-day the lark did his toilet alone, so far as I was concerned. I had bad dreams about my adventures with the expert and the ruffian, and fancied that I had been arrested and ordered to pay a penalty of three thousand ham sandwiches.

Finally the Doctor arrived, and told me that the hour was late and the breakfast spoiling, and my big trout waiting to be eaten. I must, of course, be present at the eating of my big trout, so he gained his point.

During the meal my brother remarked:

“Do you know, it is rather a question in my mind if the smallest fish *are* sweetest.”

What can be said to a man who thus presumes to doubt fundamental axioms of sport? I gasped with amazement at the Doctor, and answered:

“Your experience is not sufficient to justify any assertion of that sort. It has long been accepted as a proved fact that the smallest fish are superior to all others, and such a remark quite confirms me in suspicions I have long had concerning you.”

“Of what nature?” he inquired.

“That you are merely a ‘Chuck-and-chancer;’ a sort of casual, unintelligent fisherman, all too prone to follow his own judgment rather than the mature

and digested learning of authorities; a man who occupies himself with the scenery or with original theories of angling; a man puffed up and self-confident and sceptical of others."

He said:

"If I am a 'Chuck-and-chancer,' as you call it, what sort of fisherman are you?"

"I will not presume to fix my own piscatorial status," I replied, "but may perhaps remind you that we have just eaten a trout whose bones alone show at a glance the class of fish he was. Without putting any undue tax upon your memory, moreover, you may recollect who hooked that wily monster, who played it, landed it, and brought it home. I will say no more."

"Don't," retorted the Doctor; "such disgusting conceit I have never listened to. Get your things and come on. We will fish my stream again to-day, if you have no objection."

The Doctor's local geography is just in that dangerous stage when a man begins giving himself airs, telling you what you will see round the next corner, and alluding to short cuts. Of the last my brother knows, or believes he knows, one that may save a mile. Just as if anybody wanted to save a mile of such hill and dale as surrounds us here. I told him that short cuts in any direction were unscientific, and that I was surprised a man of his penetration and soundness should condescend to them. For answer, he advised me not to talk and dawdle, but put my best foot foremost. I replied that there was

nothing to choose between my feet, and he pretended to be annoyed and hurt. He said that he supposed we had come out to fish, not to fool; he increased the pace up a stiff hill, and reduced me to silence. On the crown of this mountain he stopped and pointed to a distant elevation capped by a square, gray tower.

"That," said he, "is an ancient and remarkable place of worship; as old as any on Dartmoor, they tell me—of course, not including cromlechs. Tomorrow being Sunday, we will go there."

Then he sped forward again. He is in one of his masterful moods to-day, and must be handled gently.

As we approached the stream and his cherished pool he thawed a little, and told me something about kingfishers. He said:

"You may not know why these birds are so called. It is not because they are the kings of fishers, because, though possibly better than mere 'Chuck-and-chancers,' such as myself, they yet fall far short of sustained brilliance in the art of fishing, like yours. No, the bird receives its name from its peculiar note, which is said to sound like the word *ke-fee-schewer*."

I said:

"Very likely."

This reply of mine made him perfectly savage. He asked:

"What the dickens d'you mean by 'very likely?' You could not have answered more idiotically."

‘Very likely,’ indeed! There’s no question of likelihood about the matter at all; it’s a fact.”

I apologized; I explained that what I intended to have said was “very interesting;” but he never tried to believe me. He answered:

“Some people are so precious fond of teaching, but seem incapable of learning.”

A dog and a man and a flock of sheep afforded welcome incident here. The affair was like one of those exasperating puzzles so common recently, only, instead of marbles and card-board, the sheep were real, and the dog was real, and the man, we found afterwards, was a real man, though a poor specimen, judged cursorily. As far as we could gather, the problem appeared simple enough. The sheep were scattered over the side of a steep, gorse-covered hill; this elevation was surmounted by one of those loosely-piled stone-walls common on the moor; and at a certain point in the wall stood an open gate, through which the man and the dog, combining their energies, intended to drive the sheep. The man gave the orders, the dog would doubtless obey them. The sagacity of these animals (I mean dogs) is proverbial. I expected a treat, and even the Doctor stayed his course a while.

The hind saw he had an audience, and prepared to do the thing handsomely. He said: “Hoop, theer! On to ’em,” and waved his staff.

Of course we did not understand him; but the dog must know perfectly what he is talking about. We therefore turned to the dog. The misguided

beast either could not or would not obey. The man tried again: "Hoop, there! Hi on to 'em, lad."

The dog rushed into the very centre of the flock, and began larking about and pretending he was a wolf, and upsetting and unnerving the sheep completely. The man issued further commands, none of which were apparently interesting to his assistant. Presently the dog stopped to drink some water from a little stream that guttered down the hill-side. The man watched his opportunity, stalked the dog under cover of furze-bushes, and then, getting suddenly within striking distance, hit the guardian of the flock a direful blow over the back, swearing as he did so. Thereupon the dog screamed and shrieked and danced with indignation, and fled away at racing speed towards the horizon. We sympathized with the shepherd on his having such an ignorant, head-strong dog, and he explained that it was another man's, lent to him because of its exceptional powers. He remarked:

"What I sez is, don't hev nought to do along of dogs 'less yew can get proper broken dogs. Dang bad dogs, that's what I sez."

I comforted him by declaring:

"You did your best; you tried to break the dog."

The Doctor asked if it was important his sheep should be collected, and offered to help him get them together. He said that it did not much matter about the flock, but he would take it "main kind" in us to give him some tobacco to chew, and if we saw the dog, he would take it "main kind" in us, again, to

“lace its hide off of it.” He was a dirty, unpleasing old man, with a cracked voice. I had seen the same kind of thing on the stage, only better done. We gave him tobacco, and left him arranging a rather trying programme for the dog, which that beast will probably refuse to carry out.

This incident did not soften the Doctor’s heart towards me. He could be polite, almost fulsomely so, to the undesirable and brutal peasant we have just parted from; but for me, his brother, he had nothing but haughty glances and chilling silence. I hazarded a quip on a mouse that ran across the road, and the Doctor looked at me as if he could have killed me. I tried pathos, to which he listened with a sort of icy surprise. I told him a fact about stag-beetles, which must have been news to him, because I invented it purposely; but he merely shrugged his shoulders. I am beaten and cowed and worn out. I can only hope that he will soon reach his blessed pool, and catch something we shall have to take home between us on a pole. Perhaps that might pull him together.

The scenery alone should have cheered him up. Where his short cut, which we presently traversed, would take us to, I did not know or care, but it was as beautiful and picturesque a thing in its way as I ever saw. An ancient, neglected lane, carpeted with grass, that hid the ruts in it; bordered by lofty hedges, rich with ferns below, honeysuckle and bryony above; and canopied with a green, music-making dome of rustling hazel—such was the Doc-

tor's short cut. I suppose there is a good and sufficient reason for hacking and dismantling these beautiful old lanes, if one only knew it; but, artistically, their charm vanishes for years beneath the ruthless bill-hook and periodical prison crop.

At last the stream was reached by us, at a point one hundred yards above my brother's prolific pool. As he prepared for the fray the Doctor grew more gracious, and invited me to precede him to the scene of his former triumph. This, of course, I refused to do. I said:

"No, far be it from me. You are familiar with this pool, you understand it, and have already proved the terrible fascination your fly possesses for its inhabitants. Forward!"

Thus put upon his mettle, he cautiously approached the spot. Twenty yards off he bid me crouch down, and began conducting himself with the caution of an Indian on the war trail, or some hunter of big game stalking elephants. We crept forward, foot by foot, and had got within some ten or so yards of the pool, when a tremendous splash sounded from behind the belt of trees that separated us from it.

"A salmon!" whispered the doctor, trembling with excitement. "What did I tell you?"

"You never told me they could talk," I murmured back.

There was no doubt about it; a human voice was issuing up from the water, the treble voice of a young boy. It said:

“O-o-o-h ! it’s beautiful ! Come in, Jones, you fool ; don’t stand shivering there.”

We heard another prodigious splash, which must have been the fool Jones taking the advice offered him. Then the Doctor, blazing with wrath, dashed round the trees onto the bank and confronted them. There they were, bobbing about and gasping, and pulling the hair out of their eyes, in the very heart of the pool—exactly where one would have dropped a fly, in fact ; just two small, insignificant boys, but big enough naturally to frighten trout and salmon, and any ordinary timorous fish. A shark or something courageous of that kind would not have minded them.

“You little brutes,” began the Doctor, “how dare you get into this stream?”

The lesser boy, whom I took to be Jones, was horrified by the Doctor’s terrific appearance, and tried to dive away out of sight, like a water-rat ; but the other boy faced the position, and actually presumed to say that he had as much right to bathe in the stream as we had to fish in it. I said :

“Do you think that men come down from London and put themselves to inconvenience, and take out licenses, and visit this river for the pleasure of seeing you rioting in it, you bad little boy?”

The lad swam a stroke or two ; then he found a shallow place and sat down on the bottom, with his head just above water. He said :

“The stream is big enough for us both. It is hard I can’t swim here if I choose.”

“Don’t sit there arguing with me, sir,” answered my brother. “There is no hardship about it. You’ve no manner of business in that water.”

He whom I believed to be Jones then made a desperate attempt to scramble up the farther bank and so escape, but his more plucky friend told him to stop where he was.

“We’re safe while we stick here,” he said, calmly.

This was true. One cannot do much to a person just peeping out from about three feet of water. Indeed, considering the disadvantage of his position, the Doctor kept up his end of the argument very well. He put on a bullying manner, very strange to his true nature, and told the boys that he wanted their addresses, and that if they refused to give them up, he should pitch their articles of wearing apparel into the river. Now small boys all look so much alike undressed, that the social status of a perfectly undressed small boy is hard to know or guess at. Upon hearing of the contemplated violence to his vesture, however, the youth particularly addressed gave us a sort of clew.

“Take my watch out of my waistcoat, for gracious sake then. You may do what you like with the other things.”

That the boy has a watch is in his favor; but proves nothing conclusively, for he may have stolen it.

My brother renewed his order for the boys’ addresses, and from that moment they had it pretty

much their own way. Jones, as he now declared himself to be, plucked up courage and answered for both. He said :

“This is Master Philip Blank, son of Sir Matthew Blank, who owns this land, and this stream, and everything ; and I’m Master Frederick Butler Jones, his friend, staying here for the holidays ; and it’s hard if a boy cannot go swimming in his own father’s stream, and if the keeper was here he would tell you the same.”

I laughed, but the Doctor did not move a muscle.

“Under those circumstances,” he said, “I shall not summon either of you this time. Now get out and dry yourselves. You have had quite enough bathing for to-day.”

Upon these words the hope of the house of Blank came shivering forth, and “Jones, his friend,” finding we did not molest him, followed. They grew exceedingly amicable and worrying after once more getting into their clothes. They stuck to us like leeches for nearly two hours, and then the boy Blank, consulting his timepiece, declared that luncheon would be about going on at the house, and suggested that we should follow him and assist at it. We thanked him, but feared such a scheme had drawbacks. Upon hearing this, the warm-hearted boy Blank proposed foregoing any meal until the evening, so that he might enjoy our society ; but the more calculating boy Jones evidently wanted his lunch, and said as much. They whispered aside, not

to hurt our feelings, and finally sped away together, evidently bent, I should suspect, or snatching a hasty meal, and then getting onto our track once more. We saw both boys again the next week, but under vastly different circumstances.

CHAPTER VIII.

TRIBULATIONS—A PLEASANT LUNCHEON—ADVICE—I INSULT THE DOCTOR—HEAVY-HANDED PUNISHMENT—"ONE WOE DOTH TREAD UPON ANOTHER'S HEEL"—DESERTED—HORRID DETERMINATION ON MY PART TO DIE—SURGICAL AID—A SOPHISM—EVENING LIGHT—HARMONY IN EBONY AND SILVER—THE RETURN OF PEACE.

FROM the departure of the boys, my brother's temper steadily improved, until he presently worked himself into the highest spirits. I, on the other hand, who had started in a particularly pleasant humor, now found a sullen and morose frame of mind creeping upon me. A series of misfortunes and minor miseries drove me to it. Nothing went right from the moment I began to fish. I seemed to be out of touch with Nature. A foolhardy thirst for novelty and adventure kept my "Blue Upright" to the tops of trees and other impossible places, from which, at great personal tribulation, it was necessary that I should rescue the fly. The fish did exactly what they chose with me, and pretended to rise, and jumped over the snare I laid for them, and swam under and round it, and were not deceived for a moment. My hand was also aching, for even a fly-rod, used without intermission for many days, will tire a hand unaccustomed to it. My fingers were

blistered, my thumb appeared hopelessly out of repair. Then the live flies were at least as trying and fretting to the spirit as the artificial ones. They bit me, and buzzed, and compared notes on which part of me might be said to have the best flavor. They made up luncheon-parties on my ears and the back of my neck. They tried to suck all the nourishment out of me. I had also scratched one leg abominably in struggling with a net-work of black-berry briars, and something—a poisonous serpent, for all I could say—had taken upon itself to sting the other leg of me just above my ankle. And all the while, in spite of the tropical weather, my brother was keeping fairly cool and collected, and avoiding worry and having sport. Whenever I came across him he had managed to get into the soothing shadow of a tree, and had always just caught another. From beneath his cap protruded some form of vegetation. This was to keep the flies away. He said that if they smelled the herb, all insects grew faint and flew off not to return. But the plant was worse than the flies; no wonder they grew faint; it had a terrible, almost charnel, odor about it. Nobody but a medical man could have stood the thing.

I look back to the mid-day meal of that excursion as the one bright spot from morn till eve. We found a sequestered nook where the river ran deep and slow under spreading beech-trees, and stopped a while to think seriously before dashing onward again in frivolous ripples and sunshine. Ferns fringed its banks and trailed their leaves deep in

its crystal tide. Granite sofas, cushioned with soft, dry moss, extended over a dark pool. On the bank, which sloped gently upward under the beech-trees, there had been a carpet of bluebells in spring-time, but now only the foliage of them remained. Here we lunched, and afterwards, roaming about, I came upon a late wood-strawberry or two, and took an exceptionally fine one to the Doctor, expecting, of course, that he would say, "No, no, keep it yourself," or something of that kind. But he fancied it, and thanked me and ate it, saying that he had never tasted a better. In the frame of mind I happened to suffer from at the time this worried me. I lighted a cigar and sat down and puffed, preserving a moody silence. Instead of leaving me alone, the Doctor, with best intentions, tried to cheer me. He said :

"You are taking this fishing too much to heart, old man. You are staking your happiness and peace of mind on it. Keep calm—best plan, I assure you. What on earth does it matter whether we catch two fish or two hundred? Mephistopheles says: 'Be self-possessed, that is the whole art of living;' and it's half the art of fly-fishing, too, I am inclined to think."

How true is it that a man can easier bear his misfortunes than the comments of friends upon them! This remark of the Doctor struck me as preposterous and irrational altogether. Here was he deliberately advising me; deliberately, from the pinnacle of his two dozen trout, extending counsel and in-

struction to me, who had taught him (as I flattered myself) all he knew about fishing. In my then deplorable vein of temper, I resented his reflections bitterly. I answered back, with a view to insult and sting him if I could. I said :

“It is so refreshing to hear a man talk about things he thoroughly understands. I do like people who criticise and give unexpected, uncalled-for, unnecessary advice that makes you feel as if you were sickening for something.”

The Doctor pretended not to see that this was meant personally. He made believe I must be generalizing, and answered :

“Very true; but some people cannot help giving advice. They are bursting with it. They feel it must be scattered abroad, or it will blow them up.”

“There is a vast deal more bad advice given than good,” I declared, irritably.

“And taken,” replied the Doctor. Then he rose to pursue his fishing, and left me with my thoughts.

My thoughts tried hard to raise a feeling of shame in me, and at length so far prevailed that I arose to fish once more, saying to myself that I would act quietly and reasonably, and allow nothing to upset me.

The futility of this resolve was immediately made manifest. At the very start I fell into the river—not a mere trifling fall to the knees or so, but a ponderous and complete collapse that launched me in deep water over the middle of my person, and against which my various mackintosh inventions

were useless. The fault was not mine, but a swinging bridge's that spanned the stream for the convenience of fishermen. This bridge consisted of one wire to hold on by, and one tree stem to walk across. Blondin would have thought twice before venturing out upon it. I struggled to the bank without a word, and sat down in the sun to dry. My matches were destroyed and smoking was impossible. Still, I did not complain; I even smiled to myself, wondering the while if I was really keeping my temper and being good, or if the volcano in my heart was not worse than a few strong expressions would have been. I sat in silence, only broken by the crick, crick of gorse-pods bursting around me under the hot sun. Cattle came along to jeer at my sufferings. It got about among gnats and such things that I was sitting, half-drowned and unable to defend myself, hard by. They flocked in myriads to the spot. The Doctor had vanished; he did not care what became of me. The sun refused to dry me; the sun did not care, either; I was alone in the world. My indomitable courage hastened to my aid. I rose and began fishing again with a hard, ferocious glare upon my face. Sheer strength of purpose kept me going. I said to myself, "*I will catch a trout to-day, though the heavens fall.*" The heavens were sustained, and I at last captured a trout. I did not play him or use a net for him, but just dragged him out and killed him, and felt better for having killed him.

The shadows began to grow long, evening ap-

proached, and I missed three fish running. There was not a breath of wind to send out my line, and the rod refused to do so. I wished, by everything that was sacred, I had not been in such a hurry to buy this rod. It did not suit me at all. It took a pleasure in frustrating my best endeavors; it was too heavy and too long, and a stupid, valueless affair, looked at from any point of view. Finally, the rod turned upon me and stabbed me with the lance in the butt of it. That ended my fishing, and I should not have much cared at the time if it had ended my life. I pitched the vile rod on the ground, and saw the blood flowing out of my left hand, and dyeing the greensward, and sat down on a tree-stump, and gave way altogether. I said:

“What have I done that I should be plagued like this? What crime have I committed? It is monstrous, it is unfair, it is wrong. I’ve had enough to break my heart twenty times over to-day, and I won’t stand it. I’ll go back to town to-morrow, and write a book that shall keep visitors and people from this place; I’ll blast the reputation of Dartmoor and everything on Dartmoor. I’ll warn sportsmen away, and ruin these streams; and I’m lost hereafter if I ever fish again for trout as long as I live.”

I said this over to myself twice, and then to some sheep that were looking on. My hand continued to send forth a stream of gore, and I nearly made up my mind to bleed to death in some conspicuous place where the Doctor should find me. His re-

morse would be dreadful. But the thought of dissolution, so far away from all the home comforts proper to such a time, was disagreeable. I determined to live, and so sought out my brother—not from any fraternal feeling whatever—but professionally.

Presently I found him, smoking and happy, angling with one hand, and keeping the cows and flies and things away with the other.

I said :

“I believe you are a medical man. For that reason I desire to consult you, and shall pay you what fee you think proper to ask.”

He said :

“What’s the matter now, old chap?”

I answered :

“Don’t ‘old chap’ me, if you please. The matter is that I’m bleeding to death—nothing to you, of course, but very annoying for me.”

He told me afterwards that I was a pitiable thing to look upon just then.

“Artificial flies were sticking out of you everywhere; you were wet and muddy, and bloody and blue with rage; you were dragging your fishing-rod after you along the ground; how I kept from laughing I don’t know.”

To return, the Doctor said :

“Of course, very annoying; and you’re soaking, too. What has happened?”

“I’ve been stabbed,” I replied; “be so good as to examine that hand at once.”

"Dear me! quite a nasty cut," he remarked; "how did you do it?"

"I didn't do it, and I refuse to give any details," I said; whereat he whistled and attended to the hand. He bathed it, and polished it up, and then wrapped it in a handkerchief.

"Now we're better," he declared, in a cheerful, professional voice.

"Speak for yourself," was all I answered. Then he took my rod down and packed the villainous contrivance out of sight, and did the same for his own, as we started homeward, picking up different matters I had dropped about the country.

"It will be all the same a hundred years hence," he remarked, after we had walked above a mile in profound silence.

Now, when a man uses vicious sophisms of that sort, such conversation as you may have in you turns up the whites of its eyes and stretches itself out and expires. "All the same," indeed! Why, it is we to-day who, unconsciously, are laying a foundation for the events of to-morrow and all time. To take my case, this recent misery may have modified my character entirely. My changed disposition must, more or less, affect those with whom I come in contact; and they, in their turn, will influence generations yet unborn. I have acquired a ferocity that, developed through divers channels and imparted to others, may make things generally entirely different a hundred years hence to what they would

have been. I told him this, and thanked him for a lucifer-match.

The sun had set, the stars were twinkling, the valley was full of vapor, that crept in long white fingers across the meadow-land and hid the way from us. An owl floated rustling overhead, and weird batrachian croakings issued now and then out of some stagnant backwater running from the river. A fish splashed occasionally, and, looking ahead, we could still see a faint ghost of the dying western light reflected by the water. Outlines grew dim, formless, and monstrous; the darkness gathered, and Night, wrapped in her cold mantle of mist, brooded over the sleeping land.

A little later rose the moon, changed by aerial alchemy from gold to silver as she ascended, and all nature whispered a welcome, sighing of peace. From the tenebrous region that slumbered there grew a new world of wondrous harmonies in ebony and silver. A web of light rippled over the tree-tops, fell like rain into the forest's heart, flashed and quivered in gems of dew on grass and leaf. Shadows, inky and vast, stretched from the fringe of the woods, threw gloomy bridges across the water, and lost themselves on the other side. Moonlight and mist wandered in subtle union through the valley, and beneath their gray and silver the river dreamed away to the distant sea, singing the Song of Night.

My peace of mind returned. I grew cool and ashamed. Past vexations appeared inconceivably

trivial before this great glory of moonbeams and gleaming waters. My own miserable little interests and ambitions and hopes and fears faded away. I humbly accepted the privilege of being allowed to live at all, and move, and have eyes and ears and sufficient mental furniture to realize the value of what I saw. Here was a new world to me, a world with its own light and life and history, a world familiar to the fox and the night-hawk, the belated peasant, the keeper, the poacher, but new to me. If familiarity breeds contempt, I suppose novelty may beget awe and interest; and I was glad these visions of high mountains and forests, and rivers under moonlight, had not been part of my life from earliest youth, for in that case the charm and revelation of them might have missed me. I had then gazed as the poacher gazes, or with the still less intelligent eye of some other nightly beast of prey.

I told the Doctor I was sorry for making such a harrowing show of myself. I expressed extreme regret at the part I had played since lunch, and trusted that he would overlook the past. He said:

“Under the circumstances, your conduct was natural and human. You had much to put up with. A little ebullition was justifiable. And I am partly to blame. I should not have meddled with you. You were not in a condition to take advice or anything. My tact was at fault. Every man and woman has got at least two moral nerve-centres, and, with the best intentions, it is easy to touch the wrong one by mistake. Press one ever so lightly,

and the subject becomes all shell, like a frightened snail, or pincers, like an angry earwig. Press the other and the subject's heart grows warm; he or she expands, like Nature in June, and you stand to find a friend. Some people have a knack of banging up against the wrong centre at every turn—warm-hearted folks, too, and kindly—but they leave shells and pincers wherever they pass. Others seem to put a quiet hand on the right centre, and go straight for the beauty in a man's character, as if such heaven-sent thought-reading was natural to them."

"I should have profited by what you said," I answered.

"The mistake lay, not in what I said, but in saying it," he declared.

Such a vein of sobriety and sentiment surprised me, coming from the Doctor. It showed how little people really know of each other. Your own familiar friend may have a deep well in his heart beyond your power to plumb or remotely guess at. Nor is this in reality surprising, for if we remember how few men know themselves, it ceases to be remarkable that we should find our nearest and dearest and next-of-kin occasionally developing unsuspected secrets of character.

We journeyed forward, out of the valley onto high moorland, where shining flint roadways stretched about us through the night, where a music of great silence, unbroken by even the murmur of rivers, reigned supreme. A wilderness of fancies born from

moonlight encompassed me. I conceived strange visions of futurity, peopled by all manner of beings beautiful and weird; of a time still far distant, when

“Man, in the sunshine of the world’s new spring,
Shall walk transparent, like some holy thing.”

I also secured a few choice similes, a quaint conceit concerning the stars, and so forth. This medley of ideas would doubtless have been fine reading, properly adjusted, but, perhaps fortunately, it fled away, leaving not a shadow, before a certain corporeal hunger for meat and drink which now came upon me. The Doctor was simultaneously attacked with like desires; and when, from a hill-crest, we beheld a glimmering colony of earthly lights below, and knew that it was Tavybridge, we made merry and hastened with increasing speed supperward.

CHAPTER IX.

SUNDAY—JOHN BUNYAN—LAMENTABLE EXPERIENCE IN A PLACE OF WORSHIP—SUGGESTED CONGREGATIONAL ETIQUETTE BOOK—A MOOR CHURCH—CRIMSON AND GOLD—THE BUTTERFLIES' HAUNT—AMONG MANY GRAVES—A SCAR ON THE HILL-SIDE—IDLE REFLECTIONS.

TO-DAY is Sunday, when to angle would be poaching, or worse. Neither the Doctor nor myself regretted this, for, after the tremendous exertions of the past week, a respite of four-and-twenty hours had attractions for us both.

It was rather remarkable that after telling the Doctor I should not go to church with him, I chanced upon a certain passage in an ancient edition of John Bunyan which belonged to our landlady's library. The words occurred in a sort of preface which had, in its turn, transcribed them from a tremendous indictment once hurled against the sturdy conventicler; and they set forth, among other matters, that "John Bunyan of the town of Bedford, laborer, had devilishly and perniciously abstained from coming to the church to hear divine service," etc. How these quaint and ancient accusations came to influence me, it would be difficult to understand, but my mind was changed upon the reading of them, and without committing myself entirely, I nevertheless

undertook to accompany my brother to the distant church he had yesterday observed, and to-day proposed attending.

It stood on a lofty peak, five miles nearer the heart of the moor than we were at Tavybridge ; and we started upward in sunshine and a soft, pleasant breeze, laden with moorland scents and the music of bells, chiming clear, though far distant.

The day was so fine and the air so peculiarly refreshing, that I changed my mind again about going much farther than the lich-gate of the rapidly approaching place of worship. I explained to my brother that I had a yearning to spend the morning with my own thoughts and Nature. When the serious humor is on me, church-going invariably dispels it. He said :

“That is a great confession of mental feebleness.”

I admitted it. I answered :

“Too true ; but while, theoretically, all those assembled to praise their Maker are equal ; practically, sensitive and hypercritical weaklings like myself are at a great disadvantage. A circumstance once arose which made me devote considerable attention to the subject of public worship. This incident I will briefly narrate.”

I then entered upon the following true recital of facts, together with one or two reflections arising from them.

I was just in the vein to go to church one Sunday evening, and I very properly went. I sat me down in a corner seat, arranged my hat where none could

injure it, placed my prayer-book in position, and generally laid myself out for an evening's quiet devotion. I was in a condition of mind almost to be termed seraphic when a girl, in a loud hat and red gloves, brushed past me into the pew and endeavored to sit down on my lap. I made room for her gloomily—feeling, of course, that the whole beauty of my corner seat had now vanished. I sighed, but still hoped for the best. The girl fussed about as such people will. She arranged her books and her parasol and her wraps around her. She then took my footstool away from me, and prayed a preliminary prayer upon it, breathing hard the while. I found that she had been unduly lavish in the matter of hair-oil, while, as if this was not enough, she produced, in quick succession, a scented pocket-handkerchief and a thing which looked like a roman-candle at first sight, but which proved to be a bottle of the most powerful smelling-salts. Here, then, was I in the baleful range of three odors, and now I grew dimly and horribly conscious of a fourth, transcending all the rest. It appeared to proceed out of her prayer-book, which I afterwards found was actually the case. She had placed a peppermint lozenge at the Evening Psalms, and upon reaching that division of the service, ate it—I mean the lozenge.

Despite these lamentable events, I retained some measure of outward composure, and even sang a little. But presently she finished her loathsome refreshment, and began to sing, too. Then I stopped. I never heard anything at all like it before or since.

I expected she would sing, sooner or later. She looked as if she would ; but when the vocal effort absolutely came, it was a revelation of human power, unique and astounding. I have heard wolves, and the death-wail of swine, and bagpipes ; I have listened to the hyena and the barrel-organ, and many another fantastic sound produced by art or nature ; but all faded away in the bizarre war-whoop this young woman now thought proper to send aloft. It is wasting time and ink to describe the noise she made. Her vocal register began where a decent person's leaves off ; and it went on from there. A wave of emotion swept over the congregation. It started from me and ended with the organist. I could see him dragging out stops and working the heavy bass pedals, and crowding on all sail, as it were, to get the horrible voice under. But no organ ever built would have drowned it. The girl had occasion to sing something about "Hell's foundations trembling," and the way she did it was enough to make them. A woman fainted, church-wardens and sidesmen, and vergers and a sacristan all began to bustle about. I looked round in anguish, expecting to find acute pity and compassion for me upon all faces. Instead of these sentiments, horror and rage and disgust were reflected on every side. And then the awful truth overwhelmed my reason :

They thought it was I doing it!

I nearly screamed out a denial. I nearly said :
"No, no, you are wrong, you are mistaken. See

how I suffer ; I, too, am a musician. I would rather die than emit such sounds as these, even if I could. Behold ! it is this unhappy woman by my side. I know nothing of her. She does not belong to me. Remove her, but spare me, who have already suffered so exquisitely."

I did not, of course, make any remark of this kind, but got my hat and tottered out into the air, there to be met by a sweet murmur of melody that, after my recent experience, sounded like the music of heaven. But it was only Salvationists, which shows what force lies in contrast. Now this bitter incident (and scores of my friends have declared that it is not a very peculiar one) makes me incline to a belief that something should be done towards the betterment of behavior in religious congregations. There is much quiet, ill-mannered brawling in churches, and certain points of propriety even the cultured fail to sufficiently grasp and observe.

Without myself pretending to the ability and nice discernment proper to such a task, I conceive that a little guide might reasonably be written by somebody : a sort of Congregational Etiquette Book, containing concise notes for worshippers, and rules of approved good taste for the maintenance of decency and order in places of public worship. And, further, I would suggest that the subject be divided under different heads, so that any reader might consult the index and learn from it concerning such point as he is doubtful in. Thus we should have a section "On entering church," one "On propriety

of selecting an unostentatious seat," a third "On making way for other people," a fourth "On singing," a fifth "On the giving of alms," and so following.

For an example of what I hope this useful book should be, I will venture to treat one of the aforesaid sections : that "On singing," as thus :

1. There is no absolute necessity to sing.
2. As a rule, unless you are sure of yourself, it may be better to leave it to the choir.
3. If you must sing, remember this : that men sing in church to praise their Maker, not to advertise themselves or irritate the congregation.
4. Adhere to the tune. It is the worst taste to introduce flourishes and florid passages, and counterpoint and such barbarous things. By so doing you draw undue attention to yourself, and promote a spirit in others which is not conducive to piety.
5. Recollect that mere volume of sound can neither impress man nor angels.
6. In the event of having no hymn-book, demean yourself calmly, and it is more than probable that your next neighbor may offer you the benefit of his. If you suspect such will be the case, look to your thumb upon that side. It is most undesirable, when a fellow-worshipper offers you the half of his or her hymn-book, to place an ill-kept thumb upon it.
7. Should your thumb do you no credit, endeavor to polish it up, or else draw on your glove, if you

have one. Failing these alternatives it will be better to say you are short-sighted.

8. Concerning the Offertory Hymn, do not pretend to be so engrossed in it that you miss the bag or plate when it comes to you ; and do not look round afterwards with startled surprise, and a face implying that you had proposed putting in half a guinea. Such shallow trickery can deceive no one who habitually goes to church.

I write this much to show the class of work I desire to see produced. It will give me keen satisfaction, moreover, to do an introduction for the author of it when his book shall be ready to print.

We were now nearly at our destination, and in the midst of a scattered flock slowly ascending to church. Hardy yeomen, courteous and respectful to a degree only seen far from towns—fine powerful fellows in broadcloth, with their wives and daughters, were now about us. Ancient gaffers and gamblers also toiled sturdily up the hill, together with many clean and nice little children, rosy-cheeked maidens, and loutish but brawny youths, whose Sunday garments were unattractive to see, and, apparently, uncomfortable to wear. Above the lich-gate, which at length was reached, stood a wind-worn pine-tree or two, dwarfed somewhat, and bent and blown out of uprightness by long years of rough gales from the west ; and here, as also at the church porch, we saw many a warm salutation, hearty “Good-mornin’ to ’e,” and stout hand-shake.

The quaint little building of gray granite, with its lofty tower surmounted by the top-heavy pinnacles so often to be seen in this region, stood on a broad plateau, in a theatre of varied hill and dale. Separated from the church-yard by a wall facing east were farm-lands flanked with a few white cottages; upon the western side the majestic, purple bosom of the moor swept in broad, noble curves downward to a wooded valley far below.

Then, as the last belated worshippers hastened out of the hot sunshine into the cool shadows of their church, as the murmur of voices, praying in unison, floated to my ear, I sat upon the aforesaid eastern wall and took note of many matters worthy the noting.

Before me extended a great vision of crimson and gold, of bearded wheat, ripe for the sickle, and poppies, gleaming alone or in clusters through it. Waves of dull gold rippled over the corn tops, and the scarlet flowers dappled their tide with brightness, flashing like vivid weeds in a Pactolian river. To my feet swept this rich and rustling harvest, to the foot of the wall that girdled all that other harvest of graves beyond. Here the herbage was green and rank, and ripe with seed; grasshoppers chirruped among the tombs; little lizards, golden-eyed, sunned themselves on the lichen-stained memorials of the past: on the massive slab of slate, on the rough granite cross, on the simple wooden bars running from head to foot of the graves, much used of old, and still often to be seen remaining.

“After life’s fitful fever,” this seemed a last resting-place to envy. The rustic dead truly slept well in a spot as free and wild as had been their own rural lives of toil on the mountain fallows.

The soft murmur of voices and a subdued breath of organ music floated through the silence ; a jackdaw praised God also to the best of his ability, cawing and pluming his shining purple wing on the weather-worn tower above me ; great humblebees boomed past, laden with sweetness ; and the air danced and trembled over all, under a cloudless dome of summer blue.

Down the hedge of the cornfield extended a trailing wilderness of wild flowers. Silver-weed, sprightly toad-flax, dead nettles, white and red, an oxeye daisy or two, towering foxgloves and others, whose names I knew not, all throve here in friendly company, and formed a butterflies’ paradise.

A veritable kaleidoscope the beautiful insects made of it. Never before had I seen so many gathered together. The pale flame-colored Brimstone, with his unique and shapely wing, adorned the dance, supported by the Small Tortoise-shell, in orange raiment, fringed with pearls. The Peacock, less active, occasionally sat himself by me to rest, while I admired with respect his rich brick-colored wings and their resplendent eyes. A Red Admiral, in gleaming uniform of black and scarlet, flitted over to see a friend, and many less notable flies, such as the Large and Small Whites, the Sociable Meadow Browns, and the Wall Butterflies were of the party ;

while tiny Blues and Small Heaths fluttered over from the moorland.

There I sat, blinking and sighing with pleasure to myself in the high noon, breathing out a sort of anacreontic, wordless song of delight, and courting a sunstroke if ever man did so.

Then I started to meditate among the grassy graves. From earliest infancy I have had ghoul-like propensities. Indeed, most children have. As a frocked babe, out walking with a little wooden hoop and a nurse-maid, my conduct was generally good and decent, but a funeral always rendered me unmanageable in a moment. Upon the appearance of such gloomy pageant, I would cast my hoop and other childish treasures to the winds, and set forth in grim pursuit, even as youths of less tender years follow a fire-engine, but with this difference, that the engine distances its admirers, while I, by keeping at a steady, untiring trot, generally managed to be in at an interment, if my nurse-maid did not overtake me, as was sometimes the case. I used to literally hunt funerals, and have mourned at scores of them where I had no sort of business. When an aged grandparent was taken, and I attended the obsequies by just right of relationship, my gratification was extreme. I made the most of it, was the first to be at the grave-side and the last to leave, wept and mourned like any adult; and nobody, of course, dared to chase me away. The amount of damp enjoyment I got upon that occasion beggars belief. People pitied such evident sorrow, but I re-

fused any comfort, knowing, young though I was, that time is the only thing which brings consolation in these cases. Then I went home and had a thimbleful of sherry and a sweet biscuit, and plucked up my shattered spirit, and hoped it might please Heaven to take some other near relation of mine before long.

It is different when you grow up and learn to see the beauty of having kindred to love. It is different when you stand dry-eyed above the grave of a heart that has beat for you from your birth, when you see nothing but the vanished eyes looking into your own, when you hear nothing but the murmur of the silent voice, feel nothing but the dreary agony of that irreparable loss. It is different when one who shared your life, who gloried in its joys and grieved over its sorrows, can do so no longer ; when the sun of your being sinks forever, when your home is left unto you desolate, and the years to come stretch their weary solitudes through a sad region of withered hopes and outer darkness. It is different when we stand by a baby's little grave, mourning dumbly the tiny light of life that kindled great fires in our hearts, and now, disappearing whence it came, leaves them icy cold. It is different when age grows upon men, when one by one death snaps the living links that bind all souls to earth ; when those whom they loved and who loved them each fades in turn away ; as, with their dead, they bury the interests, hopes, passions, and ambitions which have gone to build the total fabric of their work on earth.

And it is far different when, at the limit of his span of days, an aged man reviews the graves of those who long since sang the music and made the sunshine of his life. Yes, one needs to be very young indeed to get much genuine entertainment out of a funeral.

Among the graves I now slowly perambulated, reading strange verses with rough noble ideas sometimes hidden in them, and courting thereby entire loss of memory, as the ancient superstition hath it. The bucolic minds responsible for these productions scarcely sounded so loud a note of hope as might have been anticipated. Some, indeed, sang of the joys beyond, but most were contented to chronicle lamented death, adding thereto a word of warning for those who, in future years, should survey the tomb. Thus we had :

*Reader, consider well, improve your time;
The grave that next is opened may be thine.*

And, again, this couplet, often repeated :

*Reader, be who you may,
You are not sure of a single day.*

A favorite device was the carved circle of a clock dial telling the hour of twelve, and, beneath it, the pregnant words :

My time is past.

Not devoid of interest either appeared a rude verse set upon the grave of some ancient pair. The

lines have an artless simplicity, a naïve frankness, that is beautiful to me :

*The Lord was pleased to give to us
A time longer than some ;
To see our children's children dust—
Yet now, you see, we're gone.*

Elsewhere I observed the beginning of a verse, which furnished a picture in little of every human existence, running thus (and not to be taken jokingly) :

*The cup of life to him was given,
Tho' bitters in it crept.*

Lastly, to tax your patience no further, I will transcribe a blacksmith's epitaph, and with it make an end of this monumental survey :

*My sledge and hammer both declined,
My bellows too have lost their wind ;
My fire's extinct,
My forge decayed,
And in the dust my vice is layed ;
My coal is spent,
My iron's gone,
My nails are drove,
My work is done.*

Turning now, I looked down upon the moorland, where granite-studded fells swept in ragged and bold curves to the tors above them and the valleys beneath. Far as the eye could see, the same wild,

many-tinted landscape extended, until its colors grew dim and its outlines vanished in the summer haze. But even here, in the lap of laughing, glowing Nature—even here, showing but as a gray scar on the mountain side, I saw a spot to make men sigh and turn their thoughts through channels sad and full of pain. Rightly, by the nature of the tale it told, might that distant rift be termed a scar. There men wrestle with the stony heart of the hills; there bronzed and brawny fellow-creatures, clad in quaint garb of yellow and brown and blue, with broad black arrows branded on their vesture and, maybe, sharper arrows still rankling in their hearts, perform divers tasks with pick and trolley and barrow. There, also, stand armed sentinels in black to guard each gang; there chains may be heard to rattle where all but convict man is free as air; there, in a granite quarry, the poor sinners suffer their punishment; while far above, the hawk on outstretched wing floats motionless, while the life of the moor ebbs and flows and rejoices around them, while Nature sings to their lonely hearts of liberty. To-day only do they rest from their labors, but the scar remains.

I have often heard men grumble that this noble Dartmoor should be made to wear a sorry settlement like Princetown upon its breast; but, apart from considerations of health and convenience, there appear, I venture to believe, a hidden right and beauty in such an arrangement. It is well that the sin-stained dwellers in the dark hiding-places of cities should see such a land as this; it is well they should

work out their earthly salvation at least amid the pleasant and innocent scenes as yet untouched in their main features by man. And to hearts where the glimmer of good still burns—a flame not to be denied to any—Nature speaks in sunshine and silence, in fleeting mists and sighing winds, breeding something that is of heaven, fanning the sparks still smouldering in cold embers of despair, softening and sweetening and breathing, even to the bitter and brutal, a note of Hope.

Many may sneer at a false sentiment which they conceive underlies this notion. But to them I would earnestly say that the wordless voice of Nature can and does speak to the hardest hearts: and to none more forcibly than those who, born and nurtured in towns, come to her in ignorance of her secrets, and find themselves for the first time amid her great manifestations.

Then from the thoughts of many whose chapter of wrong-doing was perhaps forever ended by the gracious environment of their mountain purgatory, I turned to the raw material. God forgive everybody that we should in this enlightened age recognize a class called criminal. But it is perhaps better not to shut the eyes to a fact that every newspaper sufficiently proclaims. And it is also to be believed without question that this same criminal class has babies in very considerable numbers, and loves them, according to its lights, like respectable communities. Nor is the infant's education neglected. We may imagine his fond parents scheming a brilliant career

for the unweaned babe, already seeing fine possibilities of larceny in the little fat fingers, already claiming the mite that crows and plays with his toes as a recruit in the great predatory army. I look over the gorse and granite and heather down to the green meadows and the silver waters below. I picture these hills and dales alive with the small Arabs of our streets and alleys. I see hard young eyes grow round and soft in a world that is all new. I see little hands that have been taught their right place is in other people's pockets, now laden with heather and tinkling harebells; little feet that have pattered in dark kennels, and over many a mile of chill pavement, now racing upon the hill-side down to the soft grasses and the pure streams below; and I hear voices that have known no true laughter until now, pealing childlike here, waking long-silent echoes. To the ruddy country babies this is life—they know no other; to the sharp and hungry babies who struggle and fight the great fight of existence from their cradles, these brown and sunny moors, these forests, these skies of azure, this land of bells and waterfalls, of noble sunsets over high mountains, would be the glimpses of a paradise, the opening vision of a new earth. Is it amiss to vivify Dartmoor, as I did then; to hear, in the murmur of its manifold life, an echo of words spoken by the great Lover of Children? Is it amiss to picture this region of peace spreading its golden and purple arms lovingly, yearning to give of its riches to brighten young hearts, whispering over hills and val-

leys, "Suffer the little children to come unto me?"

At any rate a mighty refuge for pauper babyhood, a notable home for poor young things that rush uninvited into this world to find they have drawn a blank, would look better on Dartmoor than a prison ever can; even as a free, growing baby is a sweeter sight to behold than a chained convict.

Their service ended, the villagers came forth and streamed away to their homes; while the Doctor also appeared in a sedate and seemly condition of mind, and said that he had been privileged to hear a sermon, lasting but ten and a half minutes, full of pith and point, from a gray-headed and benevolent divine, whose solid sense and knowledge of the wants of his flock would have amply justified him in preaching at greater length.

CHAPTER X.

WILLIAM—HIS AMBITIONS—HIS ENTHUSIASM—HIS THIRST FOR BOTANICAL KNOWLEDGE—HIS ABNORMAL APPETITE FOR THE BLACKBERRY—SLEEP AND SUNSHINE—RUSTICS—THE DANGER OF PRACTICAL JOKING—INSTANCES THEREOF—PHOTOGRAPHY—A PLEA FOR TOLERANCE.

THAT afternoon a young theatrical friend of mine, who was playing at Plymouth, came out to see us. Business, he declared, had been poor owing to the prevalent tropic weather. He much desired that we should come and see him act one evening in the week. He was doing a pathetic part of a terribly ill-used octogenarian, and had been well spoken about by the local press. William is a pleasing fellow, full of ambition and ability. He revels in the study of human nature, and keeps his eyes wide open for bits of character. He is at that age when the value of selection has not yet impressed itself upon the judgment. He gathers up everything indiscriminately, bubbles over with splendid new ideas and theories concerning his art. Some of these notions are really great, some impracticable, some quite revolutionary, all refreshing. I am to write a rather striking part for him in the future. It will embrace every passion man has yet felt, together with one or two new ones, naturally produced by quite novel

circumstances. When this considerable work sees the footlights, the jaded theatre-goer shall find a new flavor upon his palate. Whether he will approve the entertainment, or even sit it out, is a question only to be answered in days to come.

After lunch we wandered along the river's banks, the Doctor bearing his camera with him. William was enraptured with the stream, and saw typical "sets" or scenic pictures for the stage at every turn. He declared that an Open Air Company of Pastoral Players would make a fortune if they acted "As You Like It" here, or "A Midsummer Night's Dream." The Doctor doubted this. He said that, artistically, such a performance must be without question triumphant; but art keeps more men poor than it renders rich, and in this case he ventured to bet that financially any such undertaking would miserably fail. William answered that all civilized Devonshire ought to support the enterprise; to which my brother coldly replied that all civilized Devonshire might possibly have something better to do.

Then, upon the young histrion's earnest entreaty, the Doctor brought his camera into action and photographed a fine glimpse of sunshine and shadow and foliage, dipping over foaming ripples, with a bend of dark, still water beyond.

How that dear boy did glory in the flora, to be sure! Not content with beholding and touching and smelling, he must needs begin tasting every nut and berry within reach. He had eaten a good luncheon,

there was no excuse for it, but he behaved as if the wild fruits of the earth were his ordinary diet. The Doctor checked him on the verge of a mad experiment with some black bryony, and gave him a word of sound advice against attractive-looking dessert spread about a plant of deadly nightshade. I pointed out such hazel-nuts as, by the red blush upon them, should be expected to contain kernels, and also mentioned that the whorleberry might suit his fancy, or the acid leaves of wood-sorrel. But where William lost all control over himself was in the matter of blackberries. His delight at their flavor appeared so extreme that my brother again felt called upon to warn him. He said :

“ You would scarcely imagine it, but there exist certain latent forces in the unripe blackberry, certain subtle properties, which tend to produce within the human frame sensations of acute discomfort. A dozen may be eaten with impunity, or even more, but if I mistake not you have already partaken of about three hundred, which quantity acting in harmony (from their point of view) may produce a condition of utter discord (from yours). A man owes much to his digestion, and to repay the debt with blackberries is almost immoral.”

William was alarmed, for the Doctor says this kind of thing with a professional gravity which is very apt to frighten people.

“ What would you suggest ?” he inquired.

“ I should suggest,” answered the prophet of gloom, “ that you eat no more of anything for the present.”

We sat down on the grass by the brink of the stream and smoked. We began with upright attitudes and brisk conversation and the foolish flinging of pieces of stick about; but the pose of each gradually grew more and more recumbent, the stick-flinging wholly ceased, the conversation died down to nothing. We tried to make believe that we all had our wits about us and were not in the least drowsy, but simply thinking important thoughts for the production of which silence was necessary. We propped ourselves on our arms and asked one another noisily for lights, saying that it appeared an odd thing why the tobacco kept going out. This farce came to a sudden end by the Doctor, who, to do him justice, hates all shams, succumbing bodily. He extended himself flat on his back, saying that he was going to sleep and did not care who knew it. He then produced a crimson silk handkerchief which, had there been any savage cattle in the meadow, might have destroyed us all; wrapped his head up in it, sighed, and became unconscious. Sleep also overtook me in the very act of apologizing to William for my brother's rudeness; but any such civility upon my part must have been futile, for, on comparing notes after awakening, we found beyond question that our visitor had been the first to slumber. There we lay, in a silent row, while the photographic apparatus, with its grasshopper legs, kept watch and ward.

What a remarkable phenomenon this Sunday afternoon nap is in England! I have often thought

of investigating it and ascertaining what particular social classes it attacks, or whether it obtains generally throughout society. Personally I incline to a belief that the thing is produced by some sort of bacillus which can only live in the peculiarly stagnant atmosphere of the English Day of Rest. I shall ask the Doctor what this theory is worth.

We were roused from our nap in about an hour's time by the rustic laughter of boys. Five of them stood before us, all in an extreme state of merriment. William regained an erect posture first, and offered to feign madness, and so terrify the boys and lead them to fly. But I begged him to do no such thing. Though the lads in question seemed sufficiently stolid to gaze unmoved at any dramatic display of the kind he mentioned, yet their nerves are probably weak, in which case it might happen that all would go into fits upon the spot. This must not only make us appear brutal and cowardly, but lead to actions at law and painful interviews with parents.

Our talk thereupon set in the direction of practical joking generally, and we agreed that this form of humor was altogether debased and abominable. The Doctor, whose repose had brightened him up wonderfully, told us a story of a mean and atrocious practical joke which he asserted had come within his own experience. He said :

“There was a religious station-master I once knew, named Jinks. He lorded it over a little junction on the South Eastern Railway, down in

Kent, and did immense good, converting dozens of engine-drivers and guards, and even bringing a director or two to see their faults. This energetic man had a strip of garden which ran along near the main line, and he used it to advertise moral truths, so that intelligent passengers might read and become improved as they rolled by. In the early part of the year we always looked for virtuous maxims from that garden, and were never disappointed. A certain April, I recollect, we had 'Love one another' worked out in early vegetables of some kind; while the following year he arranged 'Watch and Pray' in spring onions, and very beautiful and affecting it was. I often thought that if men lost their trains and stamped profanely about the platform as they do on such occasions, how it would have soothed them and comforted them and cooled them down to see these simple truths growing there. But, of course, no one ever does miss a train on the South Eastern. If one reaches a station upon that line, and learns that a collection of cattle trucks or what not has passed recently, one walks down the line after it and is sure to overtake the thing pretty soon. To return, Jinks told me in confidence one winter that he proposed surprising all former efforts with his garden during the coming spring season. He was going, he said, to mark out the everlasting glorious fact that 'God is Love' in mighty letters, involving the whole of the land at his disposal. I praised the scheme warmly, and declared the idea was worthy of him.

“The time of early salads arrived, and every eye was daily turned to the bank where Jinks made his annual effort. Presently from the dark earth began to sprout young pale leaves, destined, as I supposed, to fashion their Maker’s name; but day followed day, and the legend grew and grew, and in no manner suggested what I and others in the secret had been led to expect. Finally a dastard deed blazed forth. Instead of the words supposed to have been planted rising in mustard and cress, another assertion burst out in horseradish; and it was:

‘JINKS IS A IDIOT.’

“The especial malice of the act lay in the crop selected, for by the time Jinks realized what had grown out of his land and set to work madly to grub it up, the horseradish had secured a grip of the soil which earthquakes would scarcely have unsettled. He did all he could; he pretended to laugh at it, and kept telling people he had forgotten it; he ploughed the garden and planted it with potatoes in rows, but all to no purpose. Every succeeding spring saw that infernal horseradish struggle up again, screaming out, as it were, that Jinks was an idiot. His heart broke at last, and he took his life. He wandered down the line one day when an express train was expected. He got out of sight in a cutting, and laid his head upon the metals and waited patiently, and ultimately starved to death there. That shows you what a world of misery may be produced by thoughtless practical jokes.”

We admitted it was as sad a story as ever we had heard, but yet seemed to lack something which prevented it going to the heart's core as it should. We rather thought the element of truth was missing from it.

Then William gave an example. He told a tale of a man who went out at one o'clock in the morning with a friend and a piece of string. He ran the string down one side of a street, and his friend connected it with two hundred consecutive door-knockers. Then the friend and the man each took an end of their string, and, by a rapid and skilful movement, sounded two hundred door-knockers simultaneously. After which, leaving the string to carry on the fun alone, the friend and the man went across the road and looked on. About one hundred people opened their windows, the other hundred came down and opened their doors. Every door that opened, of course, sounded the knockers on the adjacent doors; so, presently, there were two hundred doors opening and shutting, and lights flashing, and quaint nocturnal garments fluttering all down the street. The fun was at its height when a policeman saw the string in the very act of sounding a door-knocker. Then the unfortunate string was chopped into mince-meat, and the friend and the man went sniggering home, and quiet once more fell upon that district.

This narrative appeared perhaps more credible than the Doctor's, but I felt it had been left to me to tell a true story free of all exaggeration. I therefore entered upon the authentic history of a practi-

cal joke once applied to myself, and was about to reach the horrid climax of it when the Doctor interrupted me. The light, he said, was just now perfect for an effect he had long desired to perpetuate as far as possible in a photograph. He grasped his apparatus and hastened to the river. As soon as the small boys, who were still prowling around us, saw that a picture was to be taken, they one and all determined to be in it. The Doctor was equally resolved that they should not be, and a grim battle began. Wherever the camera was pointed, there were the boys in front of it. The view to be photographed was a little artificial weir under alder-trees, and when the boys saw my brother get down onto a ledge of shingle below the fall, they instantly divined his point of attack. Even this did not calm their wild desire to be immortalized. They pulled up their trousers over their knees and, wading in, stood all along the top of the weir. It was both rude and inartistic of them, but they appeared to have carried their point at last. To dislodge them without violence seemed impossible. The Doctor, however, proved equal to the occasion.

“Do you lads want to be photographed?” he asked, cheerily, as if he had only just noticed them.

The lads replied that they fully intended it.

“Then it’s no good standing there in a row. Come out onto the land. This is the place for you, under the trees.”

Thus the wily Doctor lured those unsuspecting youths away into the obscurity of some foliage, and

there carefully grouped them and bid them be still and look pleasant if they loved him. They sat, motionless as statues, with fine, extensive grins upon their faces; and the Doctor photographed the weir.

"That's all right," he declared, pleasantly, when the deed was done. "Thank you, boys, I'm much obliged to you."

He gave them a shilling, and the delighted boys went on their way, fully persuaded they were figuring together somewhere within the Doctor's mysterious machine. They had no wish to see the picture; all they cared about was that they formed part of it, and would, therefore, be put in albums and beheld and admired by the world at large.

We returned presently to our cottage, with hope that some light refreshment of tea might be already awaiting us; but there was no immediate tea. These disappointments are not strange here. Our landlady has alternate paroxysms of cleanliness and godliness at untoward times. The cleanliness interferes with our privacy, and the godliness generally crops up when we want something to eat. Sunday, we had observed, from earliest dawn, was a particularly sober and sombre affair with her. Rest formed no part of her Sabbath. Her spiritual labors were, in fact, sustained and tremendous; and her husband had to participate in everything, though I honestly think he would rather have been shunting than spending the day she mapped out for him. After breakfast he was led forth to a little tin place of worship by the river, where some five-and-twenty

individuals, guided by the man who keeps the pocket Whiteley's, have been fortunate enough to find the only true and certain road which leads upward.

We laugh sometimes at these intolerant little sects, but are we right or wise? Devout believers must be more or less self-satisfied. It is the nature of absolute trust in a creed to make them so. The fault lies not in saying and crying on the house-tops that you are right, but in declaring all others the reverse. Shall we assert that to us alone is vouchsafed the golden key? that all are wrong save those within our own particular fold? Or, with greater heart and truer charity, shall we declare all may be right? affirm, in a spirit of universal tolerance, that the "larger hope" can be refused to none? Give the narrow-minded some credit for honest purpose; the bigot some sympathy for earnest conviction; be sparing of censure, eager to see beauty in all that makes towards right. Religion came from God to man; Theology man invented for himself, finding it to be absolutely necessary. Religion is a flame divine; Theology, man's receptacle for it. Grudge the Light to no fellow-creature because you dislike his candlestick. Let them be beautiful or barbarous, simple and severe, or lavishly ornate, the candlesticks will hardly last forever. God knows when His creation of mankind shall become ripe for an abstract faith; when knowledge and mental conditions, as yet in the misty future, shall beget a religion with ritual of good deeds, altars hidden in the heart, worship in action reflected through daily life,

and one universal temple whose dome is heaven, whose aisles and transepts are the kingdoms of earth.

And, further, the day being Sunday, I ask no pardon for saying that Comparative Theology is a noble study, tending to give breadth to the narrow, charity to the bitter; revealing the gigantic architecture of religious progress, whose ponderous roots are buried in the primitive ages of earliest man, whose present steeples and minarets alike point upward, rising through the centuries towards crowning glories still hidden by mundane clouds. Say not that the world is old. It is young, and still has much of sweetness and freshness in it. Let other planets mourn their hoary past. Man, viewed from Time's stand-point, is yet an infant, with all an infant's powers of development. Like the coral insect we build, performing each his own task, extending each his own environment, as circumstances and taste dictate; but the result, the ultimate force of all this labor, we who produce can in no way estimate. The work and its tendencies needs an All-seeing Eye to judge it. As man, therefore, gazes upon palm-crowned reefs of coral, and thinks, not without kindness and admiration, of the myriad insect lives which have gone to produce them, so man's Creator may be conceived as looking not unkindly upon His busy creatures, all unconsciously carrying out the Supreme Will, all unconsciously toiling upward, by paths diverse to peaks remote.

Tea being ended, we strolled a couple of miles to a mill-wheel that stands outlined against the sky on

a hill behind Tavybridge. This wheel proved an exceedingly vast concern built of wood, and crowning a mountain, steep, lofty, and desolate, with naked sides of shivered, slaty *débris*, that threatened to encroach upon the meadows below. None of us were informed as to the nature of the works. The Doctor believed they had to do with a mine, and William rather thought not, but could suggest nothing better. Across the valley, in its broadest part, tremendous shadows were now lengthening from the cloudless sunset. Upon the distant hills wound the railway, and it was interesting to note how a viaduct, not beautiful in itself, became so as a vehicle for the broad play of glowing western light against a background of forest in shade. The sight of a locomotive travelling this bright band of color, and sending up rolls of golden smoke, made William look at his watch. We found the hour grew late, and so presently saw him off to Plymouth, wishing his company of players a prosperous tour, but declining to make any definite promise about witnessing the octogenarian.

So much for a Sunday on Dartmoor. To-morrow, though we knew it not, events of the utmost future significance were in store for us. New personages were shortly to come into the narrative of our lives, remarkable concerns were already shaping from causes altogether contemptible; which fact I mention, reader, in order that you, who, it is to be assumed, are growing somewhat weary of the Doctor and myself, may take courage to proceed.

CHAPTER XI.

TWO EPISTLES — A THUNDERBOLT — ARGUMENTS FOR AND AGAINST GENERAL LYNN'S INVITATION — UNIQUE ADVENTURE WITH A LUNATIC — MOMENTS OF UNIVERSAL MADNESS — THE LOCAL FISHER — I MAKE A TROUT-FLY — IT DECEIVES THE DOCTOR — AND CAUSES A FISH TO FAINT — TRUTH STILL THE GUIDING STAR — CHILDHOOD'S UNHAPPY MEMORIES — BATS.

Two letters were waiting for me on the breakfast-table next morning. One came from an aunt; the other was directed in a strange hand, and proved to be an astounding communication. My feelings may be dimly guessed at when the writer's name is read.

Thus ran the note :

“BRACKEN TOR, MARYFORD,
“DARTMOOR.

“DEAR SIR,—Your recent meeting with me will be fresh in your memory. You ate my lunch, thereby causing me to nearly lose my temper—a thing no man should permit himself. I regret any seeming harshness upon my part. If you are still at the place to which I direct this, and have nothing better to do next Tuesday, it will give me pleasure to see you here. Lawn-tennis, tea in a tent, and so forth—the usual garden-party entertainment. Are you related to —, of —? I knew him in India.

Don't let the fact of your *not* being any relation prevent you from coming if you feel disposed to.

“Faithfully yours,

“MAXWELL F. LYNN,

“*Genl.*”

I confess I was shocked to think what I had done. I had taken food out of the mouth of the most celebrated angler on Dartmoor. I had been insolent to a person who could catch salmon; I had even criticised his behavior; but now, with nobility of character fitting his reputation as a sportsman, he ignored the horrible past, and invited me to play lawn-tennis and drink tea.

The Doctor took the affair up in a fashion that rather surprised me. He read the letter, and then said :

“Good, by Jove ! This is a piece of luck ! We'll go.”

“What d'you mean by ‘we?’” I inquired.

“Why, you and I, of course. We can't take the landlady, can we?”

“The question is, can I take you?” I answered.

He looked pained and astounded. He said :

“I shall certainly go. I have had a particular desire to meet the Lynns; and I'm the only one of us who has got a lawn-tennis racket here. Yes; I shall certainly go. They wrote in this kind way because they supposed you were alone and desolate. Had they known of me, I should most undoubtedly have been asked also; and I repeat that I shall go.”

Now, it struck me there was something behind this remark. The Doctor is not wont to be blustering and intrusive. I have never heard that he attends uninvited at parties. Such a course of action would be unseemly, and unworthy of any professional man. He proceeded in a defiant way :

“We might drive out, if there’s a decent dog-cart in Tavybridge. I wonder whether Miss Lucy Lynn plays lawn-tennis?”

I did not like the turn things were taking at all. I knew what the Doctor was on a lawn-tennis ground. He understands the game, and criticises it in a frank, free spirit that many men do not care about at all. He is always ready to take advice himself, and does not, therefore, grasp the fact that other people are often very averse to it. He would be quite likely to tell even Miss Lynn that she was not exactly playing the game, if he thought she was not. No ; I candidly disliked the outlook. I wished the great Lynn had not written to me. The invitation might, moreover, be a trap to get me into his power, and then work out some fiendish revenge he had picked up from Sepoys or Thugs, or low people of that sort in the East.

The Doctor began again :

“We ought to be there about three o’clock, I think ; unless you would rather get over for lunch.”

This allusion to lunch was in the worst of taste. I did not answer, but went on with breakfast, wrapped in thought ; while my brother routed about for

the map, and presently found that Maryford was about eight miles off, and that it had a railway station. The Doctor planned everything out, and declared we should have a grand day if the Lynn people could play and understood how to keep a court, and used the best balls. He said, as a sort of after-thought:

“You’ll come, of course, old chap?”

I tried sarcasm, though it is a weapon that makes no visible impression on my brother. I answered:

“Were you really thinking of taking me? Very generous of you, indeed. It is a handsome offer, and I’m flattered by it. I think the better of you for having made it. I will come, if you candidly believe I shall bring no disgrace upon you by doing so. Joking apart,” I continued, “we will go together if you like, but I am bound to tell you that General Lynn is no ordinary man. He might justly resent your coming, and regard you as an interloper, and be rude. He can be rude when he likes. On the other hand, if I drop him a line, hinting of your existence and of your powers in a lawn-tennis direction, he will greet you with pleasure, and you will possibly become the lion of the entertainment, and create a furore instead of a fiasco.”

My brother finally yielded. I wrote, therefore, describing the gratification it would give me to play lawn-tennis with General Lynn’s party. Then I worked in the Doctor dexterously, and presently he went out and posted the letter, not caring to trust it to other hands. He will have to wait until to-mor-

row morning for the result. He declared from the first that he did not doubt what it would be. He even got out his racket and white buckskin shoes, and arranged them ostentatiously in a corner of the sitting-room.

This morning we had proposed fishing a new river, but the excitement of my correspondence made us forget it. We now changed our plans, and determined to angle over the home stream. Concerning my second letter from an aunt, a few words only need be said.

I have a splendid collection of aunts. Some are married, some are single, some are tall, and some are short, but each in her way is a perfect aunt, and in their variety rests their charm. I have known other men who had very fair collections of aunts ; but they could not approach mine, just for this reason : that they have been monotonous. You must have light and shade with aunts if they are to be a success. My letter came from an exceptional aunt ; that rarest of all created things, a real altruist, one who absolutely devotes her life to producing some ray of light in other people's lives. She was passing through Devon to Plymouth, and wrote, suggesting that she should spend a day with us upon the road. It happens that there is a place we have long wanted to visit here, where two rivers meet, and where, above them, stands the ruins of ancient workings. This spot is known as Virtuous Lady Mine—a singularly appropriate place to take our good aunt to, and we will do so.

We presently started to fish, the Doctor going up stream to another of his favorite pools, while I pottered down stream.

I had not been long at work when the barking of a dog attracted my attention. If it is true that timid dogs bark the loudest, this particular cur must have been nervous to a truly pitiable degree. He presently appeared and approached me with evident animosity, tempered by caution. He stood and bristled and barked at a safe distance, his purpose clearly being to attract sufficient aid to overwhelm me. He was a yellow dog of mean extraction and paltry appearance. A man now joined us, though whether he intended siding with the dog or with me I could not immediately judge. He looked a plump and pleasant person, was clad in well-cut gray clothes, and carried a stick. I said:

"Good-morning. Your dog does not take to me, I fear."

He replied, smiling :

"Very possibly not. Why should he?"

"Oh, for that matter, I don't want him to," I answered; "I cannot say I admire him particularly. Still, he has no cause to bark in that fashion and growl at me."

"He has every cause," said the gray man, still beaming over his glasses. "The dog is my dog, and nobody shall refuse him the right to growl."

There seemed an element of strangeness in these remarks. I was about to reply when my companion spoke again.

"You may not know it, but these are my grounds," he said.

I wanted to be pleasant, so congratulated him upon them. I answered:

"Indeed? Then you are most fortunate; a very lovely meadow and beautiful neighborhood."

"True," he continued; "but you do not grasp my meaning. This land being mine, if you walk about on it without my permission you are trespassing."

"I have a license to fish this stream, which I can show you if you care to see it," I said.

He responded that he should like to see it, and I allowed him to do so. He read it through from beginning to end, and shook his head with a puzzled air.

"To fish, certainly," he admitted. "You are quite within your right to fish; but does it, *does* it say anything about walking on my land?"

"It says, 'Trespass as little as possible,'" I retorted, warmly, for the man kept on smiling like an image, and the dog came nearer and nearer.

"But you couldn't trespass more if you tried," he continued.

"Then what do you suggest?" I asked, bottling my indignation and even working up a grin myself.

He took his hat off and bowed. He then said:

"That you pay me a thousand pounds down on the nail, absolutely on the nail."

After this it was borne in upon me that the poor fellow must be insane. He proved himself a lunatic, and might be a dangerous one for all I knew. The

dog had a touch of it, too, for he now began to snap at me. I humored them both. I gave the dog a bit of my lunch, and told the man that his demand appeared reasonable. The dog instantly became servile, and the man bowed to the ground. I said :

“I have not the money about me, because you never know whom you may meet in this lonely country, but I can give you half a crown on account, and send a check for the balance.”

He declared that would suit him exactly, took the coin, bit it, and then, bowing again, galloped off, the dog after him.

There were several private reasons against my forwarding a draft for the odd money, but he had simplified the matter by leaving no address. I shall, however, endeavor to obtain further information of him in a sane quarter, though not with a view to transmitting more capital.

After this harrowing experience, everything appeared to have a suggestion of lunacy about it. The trout I caught rose madly and looked mad when they found who had got them; the cattle galloped madly about; the water-rats swam and dived madly; the laborers in the fields, cutting barley, were working without method; a leather-clad individual in the hedge, with a billhook, appeared to be chopping down all the wrong things. I began to fear for myself. I thought perhaps I might get hydrophobia, because the lunatic's dog had eaten part of my lunch. Anon, I met my brother, and all further doubt as to the terrible calamity which had over-

taken Nature vanished. The Doctor was hopelessly insane—stark mad, in fact.

He sat beneath a tree, laughing and roaring to himself, and eating something that looked like a bar of yellow soap. I kept the tree between us, and said :

“Do you know me? Be calm. It is I, your brother.”

“You’ve missed a treat,” he said, sighing, and quite worn out with his boisterous and uncouth merriment ; “but the man has only just gone ; we may overtake him.”

He started along the river’s bank, and I followed mechanically. Presently we found a little, round-shouldered, dwarfish fellow with a long beard. He was fishing, and singing to himself stray snatches of old country melodies.

“Will you show my brother some of those wonderful home-made flies of yours?” said the Doctor.

“With pleasure, with pleasure,” answered the little man, and, putting down his rod, he got from some obscure pocket a strange book made of old newspaper. This contained trout-flies which the Doctor’s quaint friend had himself manufactured. He proved a complete authority on local sport, abounded with odd rustic sayings, and showed keen pleasure at exhibiting the clever work of his hands to us. My brother had given him a fly or two as patterns, and in return received some infallible specimens, manufactured from live models which the little man had himself caught on the water. They had also exchanged lunches, which accounted for the singular

meal I found my brother engaged upon. It was cheese, not soap, as I at first feared, which the Doctor had been eating.

“Water-rats’ fur be right handsome stuff for fly-bodies. Then you gets feathers from the farm-yards, and makes any shade to the wings and such as you’ve a mind,” explained the artist. “Now that theer’s a proper tied fly, though I sez it—a proper tied fly, as true to the natural hinsec as may be. It’s my partickler, that is.”

The little gentleman’s “partickler” was a rather loud fly with a bit of peacock’s feather in it, and I mentally determined to try my prentice hand in secret at fashioning just such another, and so astonishing the Doctor and perhaps getting admiration from him. I made mental notes of the thing, and recollected that there were peacocks’ feathers in vases in our sitting-room. As to water-rats’ fur, it seemed a pity to kill a whole rat just for the small part of it I should require. No, I rather thought I saw a simple way out of that difficulty. Our new friend said he would be down again in the dusk of evening to try for a peel, so we arranged to meet him about seven o’clock and also try for a peel. With three goodish fishermen all trying together for a peel, the numerical strength of that fish in this stream should be reduced. And possibly the fly I am going to make will take some peel’s fancy, and so reward my labors. It would be a good and pleasant circumstance to catch a peel on a fly you yourself have tied.

The first thing I had to do was to get my brother out of the way. This I managed rather cleverly after returning for a cup of tea. I said :

“Would it not be as well to find out at the station about trains to Maryford?”

He fell into the trap immediately, and marched off to worry the people at the railway, thus leaving me free to my task. I began by choosing a big, naked hook from my collection. Of these I had several, with a view to perhaps using a worm some day for the trout, if there chanced to be a flood ; for a friend had told me that it was a fine thing to fish for trout with a worm in a flood. The hook ready, I cut a piece off one of the landlady's peacock's feathers, and started. Then it became necessary to get fur, and the cat being available, this difficulty was surmounted exactly as I had foreseen. The cat entered the window just about the time I wanted him, had a dish of milk, and cleaned his claws on the leg of the table. Then he sat down and gazed at me without winking, as cats will gaze at a man when they are trying to master his character.

It was just the sort of animal for a fly-maker, being much variegated in color, with brown patches and white. I took my fishing scissors and chipped off a tuft or two from the cat, and it purred and fussed about, of course not realizing what I was doing. Then, as ill-luck would have it, our landlady came in to clear away the tea-things. I admit it looked strange and undesirable at first sight, to see

a grown man sitting on the floor cutting bits off a cat; but there was no occasion for such a volcanic outburst as I now suffered from Mrs. Vallack. Had I been brutally vivisecting the cat, she could not have showed greater severity. I tried to pass it off with a jest, but she was too vexed to appreciate the fun of the situation. She said I couldn't keep my hands off a single thing in the house. She implied that I was making her life a burden to her. She finally picked up the astounded cat by his neck and bounced out of the room. I own I was annoyed with the woman. I had intended to tell her all about the peacock's feather, and even buy it outright if there was any unpleasantness. But now I determined to say nothing, nor should I offer any apology for my conduct to the cat. "Hang it all, I'm down here for pleasure," I said to myself; and then went on making the fly.

The insect began to grow under my hands. It had rather a tropical look, I fancied; one would have naturally expected to see such an affair buzzing about in the neighborhood of the Equator, but it appeared out of place at home. It might, I thought, after further struggles with it, be now easily mistaken for a caterpillar with wings. This was not true to nature, and the trout would know it. Cat's fur is very difficult to work with. I needed a further supply, but dared not ask for the cat. One thing I knew—there was no other local cat that matched ours. Then I added a trifle more feather, and the fly began to grow life-like, with a fantastic,

unearthly animation all its own. I felt as Frankenstein perhaps felt; I half expected to see the thing rise up and hum round the room and bang against the window. A wasp noticed it, and fell off the table in her hurry to get away. Now this I regarded as a perfect test. I had evidently imitated a real insect so exactly that other flies feared it and hastened to escape from it.

I put the finished creation on the mantel-piece as the Doctor returned. Presently his eye fell upon it, and he said:

“Good heavens! What’s that?”

Then he picked up a book and crept forward with a view of smashing it. My triumph was complete; my work had deceived man!

“Stay your hand!” I cried, and picked it up and showed it to him. “Alone I did it,” I declared, with quiet pride.

“You made this?” he asked, examining it.

“Every atom of it,” I told him.

“Why?” he said.

This is another of his idiotic questions. I cooled down in a moment.

“Why are artificial flies made?” I inquired.

“But you don’t mean to assert you are going to fish with this?” he murmured, looking first at me and then at my handiwork.

“I certainly am,” I replied, calmly.

He thought about the matter for some time before speaking again. Then he said:

“What d’you call it?”

I pretended not to hear him, and, seeing he had me in difficulties, he repeated the question.

"As to naming it," I answered at length, "I have not yet thought of that. It will probably become a classic fly, without which no fisherman's outfit would be considered complete. I shall very likely call it after myself."

He reflected again with his hand held up to the side of his head. After a pause, he observed:

"It would look very well on a Christmas-tree, but absurd anywhere else."

Then I left the house, and took out the fly to pit it against peel or anything that swam. And here it will be better to confess at once the thing was not a success at all. One trout saw it, and, I think, fainted, for it sank like a stone. Then the local angler came along and examined it and looked at me, and I felt that the look meant we should never be true friends again.

"My stars!" he said, "wonderful fly, sure enough."

Then we fished about for peel in such places as he considered might harbor them. He told many remarkable stories on peel catching, more, I suspect, to keep our spirits up than because the stories in themselves possessed any truth or value. It appears hard in discoursing of great adventures to help adding a little color sometimes. I have denied myself so far, and kept well within the bounds of human experience and common-sense, but the struggle is perpetual. I find it necessary to watch my pen narrowly, and even occasionally to make it

run out that which it has written down. This attempt to circumvent peel, for instance, might easily be managed so as to read very differently. Had I caused the Doctor to catch a peel, or our companion to kill a big one, or even myself to secure a couple of small fish, you would have been quite disposed to believe it. But no, I take my stand on bald veracity; and, as the first angler that ever did such a thing, may reasonably hope that some day a statue shall be raised depicting me in the aforesaid position. We did not catch a peel or anything at all. The little man failed to understand it; he affected to be grievously disappointed and surprised; but I don't fancy he felt very deeply about it in his heart, and he was delighted when we said we were going to stop fishing, and invited him in to supper.

On the way home our friend said that he had often a mind to try bats' wool in the making of flies, and this chance remark raised in me a strange and bitter memory connected with the animals alluded to. I keenly dislike them, and for this reason: As a child I was once promised that if my behavior through a certain long day in the month of June was good enough to justify such a blissful reward, I should be allowed to sit up when other infants slept, and see bats. I was noted in youth for addiction to extreme rules of conduct, being astonishingly good at times and exceptionally bad at others. The above offer, however, appeared worthy of acceptance, and I set out to lower every previous record in the direction of goodness. For sustained virtue that

day of my life stands alone. I never did anything like it again. I look back now and puzzle over it, and almost wish I had died then, and so left a happy certainty to my relations about my future. I spent the morning in the bosom of my family. I said kind things to my little sister and gave my brothers information concerning heaven, which may or may not have served them in after-life, but was well meant. I ate my dinner without a word of criticism, though boiled rice-puddings were a sort of refreshment I generally censured. I ate it, and said I liked it because it was so good for me. In the afternoon we went out walking, and I avoided mud and stones and other boys, and all the things that, as a rule, made exercise agreeable. I kept my shoes clean, and marched along by the nurse, and improved her mind. She said:

“Oh, you dear, good boy! Why can't you always behave like this?”

I explained that would be out of the question. I told her the strain was fearful, and, even as matters stood, I doubted if I should be able to hold out. Then she gave me a merciful temporary dispensation to climb over a fence and chase sheep. Thus refreshed, I went home to tea. My brothers regarded me with awe. The Doctor, though of tender years at that time—he had seen but four summers—tempted me. He pointed out that our kind nurse had left her umbrella on the window-sill. He furthermore explained that though his limited stature prevented any active measure on his part, yet to a man of my

inches nothing would be easier than securing the thing and secreting it for private purposes. I told him it was wrong to covet property that belonged to another, and left him swarming up the leg of a chair for the umbrella, quite unconvinced. Nemesis, however, had an eye upon him. In his moment of triumph the Doctor was captured by the enemy and slapped pretty hard.

At length came my hour for retiring—6.30 P.M. or thereabouts; and the question was raised as to a reward. All admitted that if ever a lad with the taint of Old Adam strong in him had qualified for seeing bats, I was that lad. My mother went further. She said that for mere fitness I might that evening have justly beheld anything which flew, including angels; and she would have gone out of her way to collect an angel or two for me if she had known where to put her hand on them.

So, amid universal congratulations and approval, I was led out to see bats. The June twilight shone clear and beautiful, a single star glimmered in the pale sky, everything was simply ripe for bats. They bid me to gaze aloft and feast my eyes on the sight.

I have had many disappointments and troubles and sorrows. Upon some I look back with pain, upon others with indifference, but for sheer unadulterated misery and crushing despair that first experience of bats still remains unapproached. It was such an early time of life to begin shattering ideals.

I had expected to see the fields and trees black with stupendous monsters, half kangaroo and half

vulture ; I had supposed that these terrible concerns habitually made night hideous, fighting among themselves, if nobody else was about, and glorying in human blood whenever the opportunity for a sip of it offered. Instead of such a noble scene as this, certain wretched specks, high in air, were pointed out to me, and I was invited to believe that they were bats. This I refused to do point-blank. A picture of a real bat adorned my *Child's Natural History*. I knew all about bats and their habits. I had it in print, many of the words describing the matter being two syllables long. I said that the things were not bats, or anything approaching bats. I defied my family to prove they were. Of course they couldn't prove it. I asked how bats were going to get human gore up there. If they had been right bats, we should have seen them hopping about among the flower-beds or lurking behind tree-stems, or perhaps tearing the gardener to pieces. In any case their size proclaimed them a base deception. As to their shrill methods of utterance, I saw nothing worthy of admiration in it ; I had done the same, on a bigger scale, with slate-pencils, any time this two years.

Then I began to "cut up rough," as the saying is. I felt a long day of exceptional goodness had been simply pitched to the dogs. My bad language at that period lacked pith and variety, but such as it was I let them have it. It is difficult to insult a person who is undressing you and putting you to bed, but I did my best. Children are such simple, narrow-minded things. I should have been just as

much annoyed, and shown it just as plainly, if they had really exhibited angels instead of bats, and the celestial ones had not come up to my standard of perfection, as represented by certain illustrated prayers I was in the habit of praying in those days. The following morning, I remember, I rose at dawn, and gave such a specimen of my powers on the broad, downward path, that the affair nearly ended in my being sent to a reformatory.

CHAPTER XII.

OFF TO BRACKEN TOR—LAWN-TENNIS PLAYERS—THE GENERAL BEARS NO MALICE—LUCY LYNN—SELF-CONSCIOUS PEOPLE—THE EXPONENT—A MATCH—"MIXED DOUBLES"—THE GENERAL IN A "FOUR"—FUTURE PLANS—CRITICISM—THE DOCTOR MEDITATES A POEM, AND GROWS MOROSE—AUNT SOPHIA.

THE first post next day brought a communication from General Lynn. He said the Doctor might certainly come, and would have an opportunity of showing his skill, as the best player in the neighborhood was going to be there. My brother absolutely chuckled with delight when he heard this. He pretended a sort of diffidence, and feared the man he was to meet would probably smash him, but I could see that his private opinion inclined in another direction altogether. He began to talk as though he had known the Lynns all his life, and wondered if they would care for him to go over early and roll their courts, and be useful generally. I checked him here. I pointed out that only tried old friends of the family had any right to offer their assistance in such a matter, and I added that it was conceivable that General Lynn kept attendants, who would possibly resent any interference with their duties. He yielded reluctantly, and we finally started together at an hour which was reasonable.

Concerning lawn-tennis much yet remains to be written—I mean upon the philosophic aspect of the game. When you see young sun-tanned men, with tawny mustaches and rather haughty bearing, striding majestically about at tournaments, a sense of awe and admiration is apt to creep over you. You will find that these young fellows are generally in the enjoyment of splendid health and a private income, that their time is devoted in great measure to this their favorite sport, that they form a distinct coterie or society of their own. They are all, or nearly all, good sportsmen, but they don't look very far ahead; they don't waste much valuable time thinking at this stage of their lives; their ambitions are mainly limited to the achievement of great deeds over a net, between lines of white chalk. For myself, I greatly admire this sort of men: they are so very English. To hear them discussing lawn-tennis politics, as though the future welfare of the State depended on some coming match, is refreshing. But why should the game produce such inordinate vanity in its champions? I know of no other sport wherein exceptional cleverness is so surely followed by exceptional conceit. Do first-rate lawn-tennis players really, by the possession of such skill, become members of a superior order of creation to ordinary men? Or are they mistaken in assuming that they do? Is it the adulation of feminine friends that makes them so uppish? Or the servile behavior of tournament promoters? Or the continual winning of silver cups and travelling-bags and dessert services and marble

clocks? Let them, if I may presume to advise, take example from bishops and other such individuals, who, while quite as justly celebrated as themselves, though in less important walks of life, yet manage to preserve an element of modesty in their demeanor, and admit frankly, if questioned, that they are merely men after all, not miracles.

At Maryford a trap was waiting to convey us and our bags to Bracken Tor. A gleam of white dresses and red parasols, and the thud, thud of lawn-tennis balls on rackets attracted our eyes and ears as we drew up before a handsome house, approached by a noble avenue of beeches. The entertainment, whereof we thus saw stray peeps, was separated from us by a shrubbery. General Lynn himself hastened to greet us. He wore lawn-tennis garments and an Indian helmet of some sort. He was beaming and affable to a degree I dared not have expected. I scarcely recognized in him the man who had spoken so strongly and so wrongly to me only a few short days before.

Then came the great event of the Doctor's lifetime: his introduction to Miss Lucy Lynn. I was introduced first, as a matter of fact, but it was nothing of an event from my point of view, while from the Doctor's it transcended all his most splendid previous experiences put together.

[*Note.*—From this time I shall have to be particularly careful and guarded in the continuation of my narrative. Should my free and open nature appear to change, should I avoid certain topics, or use

exaggerated language when describing ONE, judge me not too hardly. Remember the Doctor's eye is ever upon me ; remember that, from his point of view, this work henceforth contains but a single character, for whom I may indeed fashion such varying backgrounds and situations and scenery as I will, but who must, from this page forward, usurp all pride of place.]

How to describe the dear girl under these circumstances I do not exactly know. Let it suffice that Miss Lynn was a budding and beautiful blonde. Her eyes were very blue, her lips were red, her cheeks were pink with exertion ; her dress was pure white, and rather short over the ankle. She was extremely pretty. Her little lawn-tennis shoes were also pretty. I liked her, I could quite understand anybody loving her. I had not the smallest doubt that people did love her. She bowed and said she hoped we had come to show them all about lawn-tennis. The Doctor thought this was satire, and told me so while we were getting into the costume proper to the sport. I thought not.

I said :

"There is no guile in that sweet young thing."

He applauded me, and declared I must be right. He blamed himself for doubting her simplicity. He was absurdly particular about parting his hair and brushing it down over one eye, which produces a distinguished and intellectual effect in him. Then I conducted him out to the party. We were noisily welcomed by no less persons than the boy Blank

and his friend Jones. They had on little chimney-pot hats and Eton jackets, with white collars folded down over them. Thus apparelled, they looked more imposing than on our first meeting.

Master Blank's amusement centred in fielding the lawn-tennis balls, but his friend fluttered round the tent where ices and divers delicacies were being dispensed. Here, under a mantle of extreme politeness in the matter of fetching and carrying, he was doing well for himself. Artistically, the garden, with its beautiful lawn and trees, with its bunting and snowy tent, its bright flower-beds, and its company scarcely less bright, was a feast to the eye. The forest shelved slowly upward on three sides of us, and though we stood on high ground, yet neighboring tors made us appear in a valley. From a sporting stand-point, I could see that matters were also admirably ordered. The grass was perfect, the courts well marked with broad, three-inch base-lines, the nets were of the best; there were adequate stop-nets also. Considering the evident care and interest taken in the game, it appeared strange that the play was so indifferent.

General Lynn had certainly given a charming entertainment. People were enjoying themselves—a thing they do not always at similar diversions. There was, however, an element of that self-consciousness which is one of the curses of our splendid nation. Knowing many a sufferer in this sort, and the marks of them, I detected, scattered among us, youths and maidens ill at ease, with an evident sense

that every eye was turning in their direction, every ear eagerly attent to catch any word they might let fall. I assure these folks that silence is their bane ; let me implore of them to talk, to make themselves prattle whenever a chance offers of getting in a word edgewise. It matters not at all what they say ; they need not weigh every sentence ; they had far better speak each thing that comes into their minds, and keep on doing so. A simple plan, should you be a beginner, is to admire everybody. Then you hurt the feelings of none, whereas to criticise in an unfriendly spirit is unseemly and also dangerous ; for it may happen that the individual you speak with, though a stranger to you, is the near relation and friend of he or she whom you speak of.

After a "mixed double" was ended, General Lynn asked the Doctor if he would play a "single" with the champion he had mentioned in his second letter to me. My brother answered that it would give him great pleasure to do so, and we all adjourned to a single court. I could see that this meeting was regarded as one of the events of the day. Miss Lynn evidently felt extreme interest in the match, though we knew not why. For anything the Doctor could tell she was engaged to his adversary. People clustered round ; even the boy Jones honored the game by his presence, though he had wherewith to support nature in his pockets. Then General Lynn brought out the Exponent, as I shall call him.

This gentleman was small of size, but had a wiry figure, and a black mustache waxed into exquisite

points. His costume appeared somewhat Moorish in tone, with a crimson, much-tasselled girdle and a fez of the same color. One mentally associated him with a hookah or a scimitar, or a harem or some matter of that kind. It would be safe to bet that he drinks sherbet, and has a fiery nature.

He and the Doctor shook hands with the effusiveness of boxers, and the Exponent was about to spin his racket for choice of courts, when my brother checked him.

"Better use a coin," he said; "a racket usually falls one way—why, I never met anybody who knew."

The Doctor lost the toss, and took "service." Whether it was that he had not performed for about a week, and was fresh, or that Miss Lynn inspired him, I cannot say, but he certainly played a good and sterling game. He did better, in fact, than there was any occasion to do. Both began cautiously, and the Doctor played the first set like a book, almost entirely from the back of the court. The Exponent abounded in obsolete dodges; he screwed the ball and himself; he endeavored to play strokes between his legs, and effected sundry half-volleys, which theoretically were wrong and practically futile. The Doctor kept a good length, and smacked all the Exponent's subtle conceits back into his left-hand corner with refreshing regularity. The local man's back-handed game lacked finish, and he ended the first set by returning a ball into the audience, and knocking the hat off a young fellow who was just saying something rather clever to a girl.

The Doctor fancied there must be a good deal in the courts, and the Exponent clung to this idea with renewed hope. In the second set my brother took matters coolly, and gave a chatty dissertation on the game as he went along for the benefit of Miss Lynn. She, by the way, cannot love the Exponent, or even care for him. Had she done so, it is absurd to suppose that she would have enjoyed herself so much, or sat on after the first set. His opponent's racket seemed to have a horrible fascination for General Lynn's champion. He returned every ball straight at it—a course of action that simplified the Doctor's game. My brother showed them the Renshaw smash, the Lawford stroke off the ground in connection with the Exponent's side lines, the Lewis cross volley, which unnerved his adversary altogether, and upset somebody's tea; and when, as a last resort, the gentleman in the fez tried lobbing, we were treated by the Doctor to Hillyard's method of returning that shot—which method is most summary, and apparently consists in hitting the ball so shrewdly that it strikes your enemy's court once and is no more seen. Finally, the Exponent sent for a brandy-and-soda, and began serving double faults, which ended the exhibition.

The Doctor praised the game much. He declared that he had rarely enjoyed one more. He assured everybody that he had had most phenomenal good-luck; which, if not true concerning the lawn-tennis, was certainly the case afterwards, for Miss Lynn expressed unbounded admiration at his performance,

and led him away to eat fruit and cream. The Exponent, as became a sportsman, took defeat with manly grace, and chid his sisters, who came to comfort him, for saying rather rude things about the Doctor's boisterous and blustering way of playing. They did not know that I had any interest in my brother, so I told them, and said I had always myself deplored the robust fashion in which he followed the game. Then the lad Jones brought me some form of refreshment, which I did not recognize, probably because he had tampered with it. I therefore declined the same with thanks, and found Mrs. Lynn. This lady was charming and cheery beyond the power of words to describe. She told me who everybody was, and how the General delighted in seeing folks round him, and what he had done in the Mutiny, and what the Mutiny had done for him. She declared that their daughter, Lucy, was lawn-tennis mad, and I begged her not to fret about it, because the disease is transitory and harmless, and universal. Then it was decreed that the Doctor and Miss Lynn should play in a "double" against myself and the Exponent.

Personally, at lawn-tennis I am what a friend of mine calls a "mug." This means that though to play gives me pleasure, to watch me playing gives other people pain. Not but what I flash out with a stroke occasionally, when a game is comfortably and happily lost, that would be considered exceptional in the best company; but these scintillations are rare, and invariably followed by something on my own side

of the net which makes even tyros shudder. I play a very unselfish game in a "four." I told the Exponent this, and begged him to put me anywhere he liked, or just give me some little corner of the court that he did not care about himself. But his spirit was broken, and he said that I had better guard half the allotted space in the usual way. He declared it was not much use his playing, and took such a gloomy view of the future that I tried to brace him up, for it is painful to see a man abasing himself thus. I said:

"Let us keep cool and steady and avoid my brother as much as possible in returning the ball, and all may yet be well with us."

This advice I still think was sound and proper to the case, but failed of effect.

We couldn't keep cool or steady, and as to avoiding the Doctor, it was beyond our power to do anything like avoid him. He dashed about and played an utterly unclassical game, and came near injuring us once or twice; while those balls which he mercifully permitted to pass were returned in splendid form by Miss Lynn, who played beautifully. General Lynn was delighted at this performance. He clapped his hands, and laughed, and criticised with great judgment, and begged us, as a personal favor to him, to play one more set on the same terms. I said to my partner, as we changed courts:

"I shall play a biggish game now, and chance the issue."

He said it was all one to him what we played or

how we played; still, if I wished it, he, too, would play the biggest game he could.

Thereupon he began to play a perfectly enormous game. It was not lawn-tennis, strictly so called, but more nearly approached base-ball or rounders, with a touch of golf in it. He hit out at everything. Neither Miss Lynn nor my brother had much to do. It was a most one-sided business. They simply sent the ball quietly to the Exponent, and watched while he smote it away towards the forest, or over the avenue, or right up into heaven, as the fancy took him. We lost, roughly speaking, a dozen balls, and, of course, the set.

Then further visits to the refreshment-tent became necessary, and Miss Lynn, who gloried in everything connected with lawn-tennis, hung upon the Doctor's words of wisdom concerning that sport. He told her she had a splendid fore-arm stroke, and she was pleased and showed it. Then they all talked and argued about what constituted good generalship in "mixed doubles," and propounded theories and became entirely saturated with the game, while Miss Lynn capped everything by asking me if I took bisques* in my tea.

I said :

"Not for choice; but it doesn't matter, if you have put them in."

Then Miss Lynn and her mother took the Doctor and other folks to see the houses, and General Lynn

* The subtle bisque was a power when these things happened.

asked me if I would play with him against a couple of boys who wanted taking down. Now, it is for some such opportunity as this that I have been yearning. To play with the General, and so regain his good graces, was a great and grand thing to have befallen me. The lads who wanted taking down came from Eton, and exhibited the assertiveness produced by education at that famous establishment. They had more "bounce" between them than all the lawn-tennis balls put together. I told the General that there was a good deal of difference between playing lawn-tennis and playing *at* it. I added that we ought to beat this pair handsomely, and I mentally vowed that we would do so if I could bring it about.

The General was an enthusiast, like his daughter, but rather over-estimated his game, as elderly gentlemen will, and showed a very exaggerated notion of his own agility. He had a wild whim about leaping full three inches into the air to take volleys which would have been better left alone. Finding, however, that these tactics were unproductive, he relinquished them and came to the back of the court, and from there we played a game which was steady and sufficiently accurate. We slaved and toiled unceasingly to come at success. Good-fortune smiled upon us, and we beat the self-sufficient boys, though only after a great struggle.

General Lynn made no attempt to disguise his satisfaction at this. He applauded both himself and me. He actually invited me to go fishing with

him on the day after next ; and I felt that a friendship had sprung up between us which no power of man, or paltry appropriation of ham sandwich, should ever again annul.

I told him that I would go to the world's end, if necessary, to see him fish. I mentioned the opinion of the water-keeper concerning him, and he said the man was a very fair judge, and seemed gratified.

Then the Doctor and Mrs. Lynn approached, and we found, by odd chance, that they too had arranged a sort of meeting for the same day. It happened thus: the wily Doctor had questioned Miss Lynn upon her coming charity entertainment at Tavybridge. He had congratulated her on her pluck in promoting such a thing, and had heard of all the difficulties attaching to it. She told him how hard a matter it was to secure sufficient talent on Dartmoor, and he had said, in a casual, deep way, that he had had a hand in dozens of similar concerns, and always found a banjo to "go" better than anything. Then it transpired that the Doctor could play this instrument ; and in the end, as my brother rather hoped, he had been earnestly entreated to give his valuable aid, both as regarded experience and stringed music. Mrs. Lynn and her daughter were driving into Tavybridge upon the day I was to fish with the General, and the Doctor promised to meet them and view the school-room in which the performance would take place, and make suggestions. He also undertook to find some "local talent," as he described it ; which, seeing that our

acquaintance with the good people of Tavybridge is practically limited to Mrs. Vallack and her husband and their baby, appeared rash in him.

None of these folks would be any sort of use as public entertainers; but my brother is a man of resource, and will doubtless do something. Then people began to leave, and the garden-party came to an end in the shaking of many hands and the rolling of carriages; while, for those who needed them, arose the question of trains back to Plymouth and other places. I said I rather thought there was something going our way at "fifteen-forty" or thereabout, and the Doctor afterwards told me he thought it vulgar. To this I answered that Miss Lynn had laughed when I spoke it, which caused him to admit that perhaps it was slightly amusing.

My brother settled down in the train with a contented sigh, and, as we happened to be alone, began at once.

"Well, what do you think of her?" he asked.

"Which particular 'her?'" I answered; "there were so many, God bless them."

"Were there?" he said, quite simply. "I noticed but one."

"You mean that tall, red-haired woman?"

I think he said "fool," but as much to himself as to me.

"I liked Miss Lynn," I continued.

He nodded gravely.

"Wonderful volleyer, for a girl," he said.

"Wonderful girl every way," I replied, feeling it would please him.

"Candidly, do you think so?"

"Yes, and pretty, too."

"More beautiful than pretty," he said.

I thought "pretty" was exactly the word, but did not hold out for it.

The Doctor reflected for a while, and lit a cigar without cutting the tip off.

"I should guess her age to be eighteen; and she didn't strike me as being an engaged girl," he remarked, presently.

"Curious."

"What do you mean by 'curious?'" he inquired, sharply.

"Curious she is not engaged," I explained.

"There was nobody worthy of her at Bracken Tor to-day," he took it upon himself to declare.

"Not a soul; such a girl might aim at princes," I assured him.

"Poetry and lawn-tennis are her favorite pursuits," he went on, disregarding my remark. "Odd, is it not? Just the same as mine."

This startled me. Again I found that the Doctor was not as well known to me as I supposed.

"I had no notion you cared for poetry."

"Hadn't you?" he answered, but did not go into the question. In fact he rather avoided it, I fancied.

"Should you say her eyes were blue or violet?" he asked, suddenly, in a matter-of-fact way.

"For the purposes of a poem," I answered; "if you are meditating any outrage of that sort, it would be better to regard them as blue. Violet is an awkward word to fit with a happy rhyme."

My brother chose to be angered. He said:

"Other people can use pens and paper besides you, and a thundering sight better, too."

I allowed the truth of this; I made no pretension to being unique in such a matter; I was pleasant to the Doctor and encouraged him, and offered to give him particulars concerning a rhyming dictionary, or even telegraph to town for one. Secretly, I was, of course, sorry for him. I hoped he might come well out of it, and not get himself despised by the girl; for times are changed, and writing of poetry to young maids is hardly so common as formerly. When sensible men are in love nowadays they don't bother about making verse, but go into the world and try to make money. If he has decided, however, to produce a poem, my brother will do so. No power of earth can stop him when he thinks a thing is his duty. Nor would this be his first essay in light literature. As a mere lad he wrote stories of murder and carnage, and shed imaginary blood with a free hand. So much so, indeed, that unless he had taken to the thing literally as a part of his profession, I doubt not he must have developed into an author of great and gory power.

The Doctor grew taciturn after insulting me, until I began talking of our aunt Sophia, who was to reach Tavybridge that night. We proved to a mir-

acle that she must now be in the very train which was bearing us along; and, sure enough, out she got at our destination, and kissed us publicly, and loaded us with different light concerns to carry. But her heavy baggage was going on to Plymouth, which we felt to be well. And we took her with rejoicings to our cottage and supped handsomely; but the Doctor was in a brown study all the evening, and not great company, though he remembered himself sufficiently to send a telegram for his banjo and other affairs.

CHAPTER XIII.

A DAY WITH AUNT SOPHIA—THE WOMAN AND THE BUNDLE—
AZURE AND GOLD—THINGS HARD TO TELL OF—THE HOUSE-
FLY—A MEETING OF WATERS—THE BEAUTY OF SILENCE—
FISHING—A NEW KEEPER—LOST ON DARTMOOR—THE CAST-
ING AWAY OF AUNT SOPHIA—"ALARUMS AND EXCURSIONS"
—TO THE RESCUE—SAVED—JACK-A-LANTERN.

OUR plans for Aunt Sophia's entertainment seemed good to her. She thought such a trip as we had arranged would be pleasant, but as to a pony-carriage, she refused it, being a splendid walker, and fond of exercise. We started after breakfast, the road tending upward, as every road does from Tavybridge but one, which winds in the valley. We were soon on high ground, with elastic turf and heather beneath our feet, snowy mountains of summer cloud gleaming in sunshine above our heads, the murmur of life in our ears, the sight of new woods and forests in our eyes, with moorland rising above them and meadow-land beneath, with vast expanse of variously colored mountain and valley, all bound about by a dim and distant horizon of gray and purple tors. The pride of the morning had fallen in a sweet shower at dawn, and a fine day promised to follow.

Aunt Sophia, while allowing nothing of beauty to escape her, yet found ample time to brim over with

fun and rare humor and merry stories for our benefit. Her discourse is at all times larded with truths; her great experience of well-doing has brought to her a knowledge of the world as deep and wide and sweet as the sea. She is an optimist within reasonable bounds, though others who have striven as she has done among the poor and needy would, in many cases, have allowed their energy and noble resolutions to fade, and bitterness and hopelessness to appear before the sight of so much misery and evil. But my aunt, without pretending that this is the best of all possible worlds, certainly never allows herself to call it the worst. She inclines to the opinion that our round earth is pretty much what man makes it, and believes that the future shall be brighter than the present.

She told us how that a cross, sour-faced woman with a bundle had sat over against her in the train yesterday; and how she, suspecting the bundle to contain human life, had by this happy guess won the surly mother's heart.

"She scarcely opened her mouth except to grumble at the heat and the length of her journey, until I asked her to let me peep at her baby because I liked them. Then a smile came over her hard face and she started. She began by saying 'Lord love it,' meaning the bundle. She went on with particulars concerning its early life, its nobility of character, its dental troubles, its fortitude under them, its escapes from death, the opinion of medical men upon it, and of relations. She explained its tastes in the

matter of food-stuffs, and its capacity for solids, which was prodigious, and ought to have been checked. She spoke rather disparagingly of its father, who, she said, had been known, under alcoholic influences, to kick the cradle across the room when she was out. We talked at great length, and when I left her and met you boys, I could still, in the darkening night, hear her saying 'Lord love it,' all to herself."

Thus spoke Aunt Sophia, and the Doctor answered that, in the matter of kicking cradles, the woman was to be fairly credited, for drunken men often maltreated their offspring thus, and he had known cases himself.

This digging into hearts with the golden spade of sympathy is a beautiful art, and one to be cultivated by anybody desiring knowledge of human nature. Churls learn little of their fellow-creatures, sympathetic people learn much.

The Doctor nearly broke his neck climbing onto banks and boulders in order that he might point where Maryford lay among the mountains. Finally he marked down Bracken Tor to his own satisfaction, though I question if he had not really missed it by ten miles or so. He was pleasanter to-day and somewhat sleepy, which makes me suspect that he sat late overnight in the privacy of his chamber getting things into train for his poem. I wished he would leave it to me. For a brother, I would do a task of this kind on merely nominal terms—say half a guinea a line, and spare no trouble or labor.

We began to near the Virtuous Lady Mine, of which I may say at once I could find none to tell me the history or legend. There must have been a mine once and doubtless a virtuous lady; but we saw nothing to be called a mine now, nor yet any lady, virtuous or otherwise, for the place was most lonely, though beautiful withal.

As we approached it, a great effect of gold against rich azure came before us. Like a flaming cliff, there rose, on the opposite side of the valley, a hill, bold in curve and high, and clad with broom and furze. Never had we seen any show of color so brave. Rocks broke through it and outlined it against the bright blue above. Many goats, gray and brown and black, roamed at their will on this mountain, climbing with great skill and instructing their bleating kids in the art of surefootedness. Men also worked lower down, knee-deep in bracken, the which they were cutting and mowing ruthlessly. They leave the fern where it falls until it becomes dry, and then store it in stacks for winter use. Both bracken and heather make fine and sweet litter. A man might sleep on a worse bed than these.

We were now walking down-hill, and from the green woods, still far below, rose the sigh of water—an accompaniment to every like piece of valley scenery in this emerald county. But the air of shelter and repose, the freedom and breadth, as we came to that shaded stream; the orchards, bowed under the ruddy fruit, with plump, crimson apple and gray lichen nestling together; the wild hedges, whereon

Nature's autumnal jewelry already gleamed in silver festoons of clematis and coral trophies of bright berry; the sunshine; the scent of roses and lavender from tiny cottage gardens; the hum of honeybees; the great peace, though it was noontide—the soft peace, only broken by the musical click-clack of a farm cart slowly lumbering before us; and the hazel bank, all adorned with barley, where a wain, in passing, had been robbed of its bearded ears—these matters, with their sights and savors, and the spirit hidden therein, are wellnigh impossible to set down in ink upon a page. Artists who love such rural beauties and who have warm hearts and full palettes, may get nature and rustic life nearer to their audiences; but even their hay-fields smell of turpentine; and to sometimes see the hair from a painter's brush left sticking in the billowy clouds of sunset or storm destroys illusion.

A trifle will spoil a picture to many people. I remember a battle-piece which, upon viewing it, I felt to be grand and inspiring. It was painted by a realist, and left very little to the most active imagination but thunder of cannon and screams from dying throats. The horrors of war spread before me; the mortal strife, the passion, the agony. As I gazed at fiery gleams, like yellow knives, bursting through the sulphurous pall of smoke that hid a battery, I beheld something move in the very heart of the explosion, and lo! a house-fly sat there, like some sort of entomologic Shadrach superior to combustion. The picture seemed to shrink under my gaze after that, while the

fly increased and finally dominated everything. He trampled about on the dead and wounded, and stopped to polish his face before a charge of cavalry, and made me long to kill him with my catalogue—a thing I would have done, but that I was in a public exhibition, where such an act must throw me open to misconception.

After passing the cottages, our road grew more lonely, and presently we reached a meeting of rivers already mentioned. The smaller stream, its long and solitary journey ended, sped with rushing and bubbling joy to meet a bigger relation. At the juncture bright foam danced in creamy patches, and the waters were all hurry and swirl, with a thousand silver jets leaping up against the foot-way of bowlders which crossed them; but lower down, where the mingled rivers ran deep, one could see the new arrival coming to the air again after its first plunge, and there the smooth stream's face was dimpled and curled and spread with an oily tremor that rose eternally, and wound hither and thither, touched with shimmering light.

The larger river we felt must be taken seriously. It appeared a considerable body of water, with long, broad reaches, lofty banks in some places, and framed with scenery moulded upon a greater scale than any we had yet observed. The finest spot to describe lay just below the mingling point of the two streams. Here giant acclivities robed in oak rose above a still, deep basin of black water. The hill curved in such fashion that colossal shadows fell

across it, darkening half the steep of trees and all the river below. But above, the foliage was full of sunlight, and this brightness, in measure reflected by the shadowed water, sent glinting stars and sparks of sunbeam playing unexpectedly upon ferns and rocks and the trunks of trees at the pool's margin. Below the bend of this great hill the river-bed fell suddenly, affording exquisite contrast between that dark, silent basin above, and glowing falls of roaring, flying, foaming water, alive with light and action, with shaking branches and trailing briers, and the flash of wet granite.

Overlooking these things, beneath the mouldering walls of an ancient cottage, we sat us down and lunched. Aunt Sophia, who loves Nature, albeit most of her time is spent in cities, declared herself to be much blessed in seeing such a view as this. She is one of those wise and desirable people who do not talk unceasingly in the presence of fine scenery. She keeps up no vexatious criticism or running comment; she does not flatter the works of God by calling them "nice" or "pretty" or "sweet;" she prefers rather to gaze and reflect silently, and paint the landscape on her heart, where in years to come Memory shall find it fresh and true and unfaded. If people would only think instead of talk when they stand before any notable production of art or nature, they might benefit every way.

A ring of barn-yard fowls assembled to see us eat. They closed in gradually upon us, led by a draggle-

tailed, sorry hen who had scarcely a decent feather to her back. This bird, with strange selfishness and bad judgment, would often leave choice fragments merely for the sake of snatching morsels from its friends. It hated to think anybody was having anything but itself. It gorged and clucked about in a manner most objectionable, and nothing alarmed it. Aunt Sophia said that the ill-conditioned thing strangely reminded her, both in facial appearance and manners, of a poor, aged woman in London. "She has the same sharp turn of the neck," said my aunt, "and the same sinister eye, while, I fear, she gets a living in the same hardened, mendicant way."

The Doctor thought this fowl more of a bare-faced robber than a beggar. He discouraged it greatly with some mustard on bread. The creature ate it, but showed a sense of discomfort afterwards, and seemed to want a glass of something cool. My brother was blamed, but he explained that he had acted from kindness, mustard being a fine condiment for restoring plumage to a bird, like rusty nails or sulphur. Then Aunt Sophia wanted to know why we had brought fishing-rods, as we did not apparently intend using the same. To this we replied that we only waited her word as a signal for starting. We put up the deadly engines already fatal to so many trout, and straightway set about adding more to the slain; while Aunt Sophia stood a long time and watched us catch nothing.

Presently a strange thing befell me. I was fishing alone in deep water when a veritable peel rose

within three yards of my fly. He left the river on some private concern not at all connected with me. Indeed, he knew not that I was there, for I caught his eye in mid-air, and it was easy to see he felt thunderstruck at seeing me so close at hand. Thus I explained the event to myself, but it is still possible that he *had* seen me and merely rose to get a better view. In that case, what he saw disgusted and disappointed him, for he did not rise again. I had never been so near a live peel before, to my knowledge, and it gave me pleasure. I fished for him afterwards, but failed to deceive him, though I dried the fly between each cast and took a deal of trouble.

Trout, however, both the Doctor and myself managed to catch. We worked up the larger river, and the fever of killing being strong upon us, pushed steadily forward. My brother was ambling along up to his knees in mid-stream, when a voice challenged his attention from the bank, and, looking up, he noticed a sturdy man clad in brown, with gaiters and a stout ash stick. He said:

“Good-morning.”

The man replied:

“Arternoon to you, sir, and come out, please. There’s no wading ’lowed down this water.”

The Doctor came out, of course, and regretted taking liberties with the river; and I arrived and apologized also, because I could see the man was looking at a sort of high-water-mark on my lower limbs, which clearly showed where I had been.

This, however, for all he could tell, might be due to an accident, calling for sympathy rather than reproof. He begged us not to wade again, because it was against the law; he then entered our names in his book, and being a man of few words, almost immediately took his departure. We asked, as he moved away, if much was doing on this river, and he answered:

“Nothing much, as I’ve heard tell on. Arternoon, gentlemen.”

Now, while disliking a keeper who is too chatty, and stops for an hour and unfolds his private life just when the fish are rising, I still enjoy reasonable converse with such folks. Icy coldness of manner and official indifference leave me unhappy. It may chance that this guardian of the waters has been soured by poaching troubles, or, possibly knowing what his colleague on the other rivers can do in the way of conversation, he intentionally adopts an austere and laconic method of dealing with sportsmen.

We presently returned to the junction of the rivers and began fishing up the second one, there being no sign of Aunt Sophia. This lesser stream wound, with many a turn, through heavy growth of trees, and we followed it far. Finally, long black shadows and glowing red lights of evening surprised us in the heart of a deep valley that narrowed, as we proceeded into a gorge, dark and full of gloom. So the last gleam of sunlight vanished, flickering farewell on the tops of the loftiest trees; the eternal mists, only waiting that signal, began to creep in

dense dews and fingers of vapor from their hiding-places ; night had already fallen beneath the rocky precipice under which we now found ourselves. I was for turning in our tracks and following the stream to where we had lunched and left Aunt Sophia ; but the Doctor said such a course would be grotesque waste of valuable time. To trace this sinuous stream might even be impossible in the darkness, he declared, and pointed, as he did so, to a rugged sheep-walk, leading out of the gorge upward to higher land.

He had his will ; and all blame for the horrible catastrophe which soon overwhelmed us must, therefore, be laid upon him, not me. The sheep-walk was a snare and a dread delusion. We started up it and followed its vagaries for a matter of twenty minutes without a remark of any sort falling from either of us. The path began by rising almost perpendicularly, then it turned round a corner and fell into bracken up to our waists with an undergrowth of furze, and probably snakes as well. Tired of this, it leaped out onto the mountain-side again and rushed up-hill and down, and into huge ants' nests, and over marshes and mud and bowlders. It even tried to get up trees. I never was upon such an aimless, idiotic path in my life. Meanwhile it grew dark rapidly, and the Doctor kept ploughing forward, ever increasing the pace, as people do when they have not the remotest idea where they are going to. Finally, the sheepwalk—though I doubt if even a sheep would have been weak enough to fol-

low it as far as we had—began to play at fireworks and throw off lesser tracks in every direction. Then the parent branch flung itself bodily into a hideous chasm.

Seeing which I spoke. I said:

“You may cast yourself down there if you like; I don’t.”

“No, it’s useless going down there,” my brother admitted, looking over.

“Quite — that is if you ever want to come up again.”

“We had better stop and think,” he said. “We cannot disguise the fact that we are lost.”

“Disguise it!” I answered, warmly, “I should think we couldn’t. The thing has been patent for half an hour.”

“Where are we, I wonder?” murmured the Doctor.

“The question is: where’s Aunt Sophia?” I groaned. “If we are lost, what must she be, in this desolate and abominable region?”

“Merely mislaid,” he replied, with irritating coolness. “Let us have your compass.”

“What’s the good of that? It may show where the north is, and where the south, but it won’t show where Aunt Sophia is or where we are.”

We looked at it by the light of matches and got no comfort from it. Then the Doctor said he felt a sort of instinct that we ought to keep moving, and I felt a sort of instinct that we ought to shout and wake the echoes. We followed my instinct first.

We woke the echoes and a rustling owl that sailed away hooting unpleasantly. Then the echoes went to sleep again, and there came no responsive shout or cry. The Doctor lighted a cigar, and said he should now follow his instinct and make a move somewhere. I said I might just as well die with him as alone, so we started. It was an experience that even now I can think of with nothing but disgust, slightly tempered with thankfulness that we came happily out of it. We toiled and staggered, panted and climbed, swore, when anything knocked the cuticle off us, which frequently happened, and bawled ourselves hoarse when we fancied we stood on high ground. We wallowed in unutterable sloughs and icy streams; we rolled down hideous declivities, we traversed long, desolate leagues of night-hidden morass and stony fell. I suggested that perhaps we had left Devonshire altogether, and should probably find ourselves among precipices on the Cornish coast before morning, or, perchance, in the Somerset fens. I said :

“The banks of the Styx would be better than this infernal vagueness.”

“I’m thinking more of Aunt Sophia,” said the Doctor.

“She’s at peace,” I answered, bitterly and enviously. “Our kind, good aunt may at this moment be with the angels, and it’s your fault entirely. We shall be—”

“With the other contingent, if you don’t look where you’re going,” shouted the Doctor, interrupt-

ing me ; for I had taken the lead now, and was dashing onward, I cared not whither. He stopped me and pointed ahead to a wan gleam of flame flickering here and there, rising and falling and feeding on the foul vapors of the moor, like a fire butterfly.

At first I supposed that it was Aunt Sophia's ghost, come to haunt and insult us, or even destroy us for having overlooked her so basely ; but my brother declared it to be a Jack-a-lantern, trying to lure us into an unfathomable bog, and so conclude our business out of hand. Jack might have been twenty yards off, or a hundred. It was impossible to judge, and we did not make any measurements, though the Doctor forgot some of his troubles in scientific interest at the thing. He said it was composed, body and soul, of sulphuretted hydrogen, and that he had often produced it in a laboratory, but never seen Nature's version before.

We moved forward once again, my brother observing that if Aunt Sophia saw the Jack-a-lantern, she might very likely get within speaking distance of it and be sociable to it, and even turn it from its evil courses, so great were her powers of persuasion.

I said :

"Don't try and be amusing, there's a good chap. This is neither the time nor place for it. I already feel the first pang of hunger."

Then we met a horse. I have had long arguments with the Doctor since as to who really found that horse. He says he did, and so saved us ; I, on the other hand, am firmly of opinion that the beast

was detected by me. It stood upon a narrow track which, followed, brought us to a stile. Then, over several other stiles, we passed through a field to a gate, and all promised well.

The gate opened onto a high-road with a telegraph wire on posts running down one side and a ditch along the other—a modern, civilized road, pleasant to feel under foot. We knew there was a ditch, because the Doctor fell into it, and I feared I had lost him, in sight of land as it were, like many a good ship that weathers Atlantic hurricanes only to break her heart and founder beneath the cliffs of home. However, my brother hopped out of the ditch again, and immediately afterwards we chanced upon a man in a dog-cart. He told us that he reckoned it to be five good miles to Tavybridge, and not less than ten to Virtuous Lady Mine. We therefore set out for the former, purposing to make inquiries, and then start with all the villagers we could collect to rescue Aunt Sophia.

“We will take ropes and lanterns and bloodhounds, if we can get them,” said the Doctor.

“And a post-horn and blue lights and sky-rockets and guns to attract her attention,” I added.

“Also food and cordials, and blankets and some comfortable conveyance,” continued the thoughtful Doctor.

I saw it would be a grand and imposing affair, this recovery of Aunt Sophia; but still the hateful fear that all effort might come too late weighed heavily upon me.

"She may have lost her beautiful life in some black tarn, or fallen over a precipice, or had the worst of a deal with the Jack-a-lantern, or a thousand things," I said.

"Not she," answered the Doctor. "Aunt Sophia is a woman of parts."

"Exactly, and they may all be separated now," I groaned.

"She won't lose her head, at any rate," he declared, cheerfully. "Her common-sense and wisdom and courage are her safeguards."

I failed to see how common-sense or wisdom could keep a person from getting starved if they had nothing to eat, but did not say so.

The good five miles being ended, we rushed into Tavybridge and began rousing the village generally. We went to the Constabulary Station and the Post-office and the General Dealer's, summoning aid and advice from each. Some of the people we questioned in the matter showed no interest, others a great deal; one proved invaluable. This was no less a person than the pocket Whiteley himself. He had heard of us from Mrs. Vallack.

"Lor! she be cast away down to the Vartuous Lady? Come in, come in, we must get some lads together and staart at once."

Thus he spoke, and placed the entire resources of his establishment at our service. But though we found ropes and lanterns, there were neither fireworks nor blood-hounds among his goods, and, not having them, he, of course, assured us nothing of the

kind would be necessary. We bid him summon a handful of trusty blades, whose local knowledge and nerve could be relied upon. These he was to bring to the cottage as soon as possible, and we would pack a creel with food and strong spirits and then lead them to their task. He said the men should be round in ten minutes, and we left him.

By Heaven! I shall never forget the sight that met our anxious eyes on returning home. There, in the glow of a shaded lamp, snug, comfortable, happy, and altogether alive, sat Aunt Sophia, just finishing her supper. We gasped, we rubbed our eyes, it seemed almost too good to be true. She said :

“Ah, here you are, my dears. I grew tired, so set out for home, thinking you would overtake me. What a pleasant day it has been. Indeed, I can recall no pleasanter.”

We looked at her in blank amazement.

“How did you get back?” asked the Doctor, hoarsely.

“How should I? Walked, of course.”

“Dear me,” I said, “we never thought of that.”

Then, bit by bit, our piteous narrative leaked out. We told her how we had lost ourselves in a sublime mountain fastness; how we had thought of her sitting forlorn and alone; how we had fought with the powers of Nature and conquered several of them; how we had escaped from Jack-a-lanterns and other great nocturnal perils, simply in order to save her; how our hair had very nearly grown white in a single night, when we thought that our efforts might

come too late ; and how we had made tremendous preparations and gathered together men and dogs and torches and many ropes, all of which things, by-the-bye, would probably arrive in a few minutes.

She was much moved ; she said we had done well and bravely ; but she added that she was not the sort of woman to sit tamely down in the middle of Dartmoor to be rescued, if any opportunity offered of rescuing herself. She had been home for a long while, and would possibly have set about organizing a rescue party for us in another hour or two.

Then there arose a babble in the garden. We heard the murmuring of men and dogs, and saw the flashing of lights. People were walking up and down on the flower-beds, getting ready apparatuses for saving life. We opened the window. I said :

“I am happy to tell you, my men, that the lady has arrived, and all is well.”

“She be come ?” asked several voices.

“Yes ; I am very sorry that you should have been troubled.”

They raised a limp cheer, and the pocket Whiteley, hastening forward, said that five shillings would cover the cost of the entire expedition so far as it had got.

They were all recompensed on rather a better scale than this, and cheered again with increased vigor. Then Aunt Sophia felt called upon to give more reward, being affected with the display ; after which I made a short speech, and said how gratifying this kind of manifestation was to us ; and

some genius, who had proposed starting to search for our dear aunt with a German concertina, thought he might as well play it now as not, and did so. Whereupon the multitude of dogs that had been collected lifted up their voices and howled like one dog; and the Doctor, growing huffy, begged me, as a favor, to shut the window and draw the blind, so that such tomfoolery might come to an end. He was punished for his lack of enthusiasm afterwards, as the whole of the assembled heroes went into the inn where he sleeps, and kept it up hot and strong for a considerable time, easily bribing the solitary constable whose duty should have been to see the place shut for the night.

Aunt Sophia was good enough to bless us before retiring; but while the estimable woman's benison seemed to warm me and comfort me and do me good, it somehow missed fire with the Doctor; for, after she had left us, he began to comment profanely upon his bad judgment; and he dragged me into it, using language that was distinctly out of place in the mouth of a man who had just been blessed. I said we had done our best, but he thought not; he even declared we had acted like idiots. Then I remarked how "all's well that ends well;" which reflection made him rise silently from his chair and go straight to bed.

In dreams I fought our recent battle once again, and finally found myself and the Jack-a-lantern at daggers drawn in a lonesome fen. Our discussion was theological. He said he belonged to the Plym-

outh Brethren, and did not care who knew it. He told me I was all wrong, like most of the rest of the world, and as to his luring me to this desolate spot, it was absurd: he had no wish to do me any harm; far from it. He justified his marshy method of existence in a broad Devonshire dialect. He sneered at the world and the people in it. He spoke, in fact, to the following effect; I only omit his accent:

“I like to hear you running me down; it is so manly and generous, is it not? You attack me just because I’m a little country bumpkin of a Jack-a-lantern that has no learning or logic; but do you fall foul of my big relations who dance through the world luring all mankind into bogs and quicksands and quaking sloughs? No. Do you blame that wonderful fellow, Gold, who turns the earth upside-down and has his altars wherever two civilized men are gathered together? No. Yet, what is he? A glorified dust. Do you blame that beautiful vision, Fame, with a rainbow for her diadem and rainbow-gold in her hand? No. Yet how many eat out their hearts and fret their poor fingers to the bone for her laurel and bay? And how many find her more enduring than I? Do you blame that knock-kneed fetich which men call the World’s Good Repute—that tawdry, hollow, gingerbread ghost? No. You yearn for it, lie for it, cringe to it, kiss it, sacrifice before it your self-respect, your independence, your honor. And what sort of dance does that decayed sham lead you? What do you go through, and struggle through, and creep and crawl through to

get it? And what do you look like when you have got it?"

"Generalize," I said; "don't be personal, and don't ask so many questions, if you want them answered."

"I know all the answers," he declared, and then inquired abruptly:

"You die, you men, don't you?"

I had to admit that we did.

"And when death drops his gray curtain between you and the Jack-a-lanterns you have loved; when Death drags his net round you, and the meshes begin to cut and tighten; when your dim eyes see the world fading, fading, and the faces in it all turned the other way—what then?"

"Then, John," I answered, with some respect, "your lantern doth truly grow to be a type and a symbol of most earthly concerns."

I awoke and gazed abroad. Starlight and mist nursed an old, dying moon in their silver arms; and neighboring streamlets, winding under forest trees, murmured a long-drawn sigh, for Mother Earth was dreaming of sad matters in her sleep.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAREWELL TO AUNT SOPHIA—TRAITS OF RUSTIC CHARACTER
—THE COURTLY GENERAL—OLD INDIANS—CAVIARE—A
STORM BREWING—PISCATORIAL NATURE—HOW TO SHOOT
PLOVER—THE DOCTOR'S ARRANGEMENTS—LOVE AND
THUNDER—AJAX PHOTOGRAPHS THE LIGHTNING.

TO-DAY, after seeing Aunt Sophia upon her journey, I walk ten miles over the moor to meet General Lynn and fish with him, but the Doctor does not propose leaving Tavybridge. His intention is to devote the morning to securing talent for the entertainment on Saturday, and report progress to Miss Lucy Lynn, when she and her mother shall drive over in the course of the day. Whether he will in reality advance with his different schemes time alone can show, but I notice that he has cast aside his angling garments entirely, rather preferring to blossom out in new tweeds, with a white necktie, a gold pin, and other precious adornments. He is, however, in some tribulation about his nose. Much of the Doctor's facial charm lies in this feature, and now the skin is peeling off it from sunburn—a catastrophe his medical science appears unable to cope with. He looks at it in the glass, and pats it and growls.

After breakfast Aunt Sophia, expressing renewed pleasure at her brief flight across Dartmoor, steamed

away to Plymouth to do good there, and rejoin her heavy baggage. Having witnessed her departure, I started at great speed to attend General Lynn, and my brother began his investigations in Tavybridge.

Ten miles on these high lands, especially if walked before noon, scarcely amount to more than five trudged through low-lying country under a heavier air. Nor do the steep hills make as much hard work as might be supposed. I had two hours for my spin, and felt no fear of not accomplishing it within that time if the roads kept good. The scenery was wild and beautiful enough, but, being in most respects similar to much already noted, need call for little attention here. Small boys in villages appeared to regard me as a show, fast walking, even to the extent of five miles an hour, being strange to them. The Devon peasant is a man alive to the salutary beauties of middle courses in most concerns of life. He preserves a golden mean of self-contained, independent action. He is fearless, respectful, uncultured, honest, and I have never seen him walk quicker than three miles an hour. There are, of course, exceptional pedestrians whose work it is to cover ground, and who perform their business to the letter. Thus the water-keepers seldom travel less than five-and-twenty miles a day, and often much more.

The bucolic mind is undoubtedly muddy, but by no means as shallow as I have heard men declare. They are, in my trifling experience, stolid, warm-hearted, God-fearing folks, these Dartmoor dwellers.

Their ambitions rise little above those things the poor in other districts regard as necessities ; they are, for the most part, well content ; and by no means, speaking generally, so vicious as people in towns. And this last fact is truly very much to their credit, for so-called realists declare that the Devil is quite as fond of the country as of bricks and mortar—an assertion, however, open to question. The works of Nature and the great free Spirit of Nature must be a power for good in the blankest mind ; while the rude bodily health, born of open-air toil in a fine climate, also appears a force working towards good rather than evil. The least intellectual among men is not only animal. For young paupers in towns, unwatched and unfriended, the Tree of Knowledge yields fruit that is soon ripe and soon rotten ; the village lad's brain, on the other hand, has no whet of dire necessity to work it so fast and sadly. For him the fruit of knowledge matures but slowly, and when full ripe may be poor enough, too ; but it will be wholesome of its kind, and sweet and honest, and sufficient for his needs.

General Lynn and I were to meet upon a certain bridge, and, by odd chance, as he arrived upon one side of it I reached the other. He greeted me with great friendliness, and we prepared to fish immediately. The General was a perfect museum of happy little ideas and contrivances to help an angler. Many of these he had invented himself, and some, he said, had now come into common use and were well thought of. He sighed when he saw my

"traces," and method of affixing flies thereto. He showed me his own gear, which looked to be about the thickness of a split gossamer. I opined in my ignorance that a minnow would scarcely allow himself to be captured with such a delicate matter, but General Lynn said that, given a fisherman who knew his business, this shadowy filament would suffice him for all practical purposes in catching trout. "If you were in the water I will make bold to say I could catch you with it," he declared. I took his word, of course, not desiring any experiment of that kind.

The General proved pleasingly didactic upon his art, as became a man so skilled and well-qualified to instruct. He showed me my faults, and they were numerous; but he prefaced each criticism with a courtly "Pardon me," "Now if I may venture to suggest," "I cannot help thinking that you err," and so forth; all very old-fashioned and refreshing. I love this chivalrous consideration for another's feelings; it is so rare. Politeness in small things, and a reasonable observance of the little amenities of life are vanishing before the wild march of this electric age. But it lingers yet in the heart of gentle and rustic whom choice or chance anchors far from towns.

I complimented him on his skill in landing the trout which he caught. He said:

"Long years of experience have gone to produce such ability as I may possess. You are to know, my dear sir, that I have fished for upward of forty-

five years. Why, I caught that celebrated fish, the mahseer, in India before you were born."

He spoke as if there had never been but one mahseer. I said:

"Well, General, if you caught him, there's an end of the matter, but I wish you had waited for me. I should like to have helped."

Our conversation, for the most part serious, touched the fringe of many subjects. I found that General Lynn was a Devonshire man born, and had the stout belief in his county every true Devon man reveals. He cared not at all for cities, but kept well abreast of the times, and spoke with great sense and reason upon questions of the day; proving, moreover, far more tolerant than, in my experience, old Indians are wont to be. Whether it is the vast quantity of curry-powder they consume or the climate, or the mixing with Asiatics or humors begot from livers out of repair, I cannot say, but, as a rule, I have found the retired military heroes of India to lack breadth and moderation. Still, they generally appear men of a religious mind, with strong convictions, if narrow sympathies.

At lunch I had a little surprise for General Lynn in the shape of some excellent sandwiches of caviare. I had sent to Plymouth for the stuff, and it reposed between thin slices of wheaten bread, white as snow and unquestionably appetizing. He had some good provisions, too, but nothing quite so high-class as mine. We did well, and he made a merry jest about my sandwiches not being "caviare to the

general." I partook of his luncheon also, and thought of the occasion when I had done so before, and how times were changed. Presently General Lynn drank a little whiskey-and-water, smoked a cigar, and praised the scenery. He foretold a thunder-storm, and there were not wanting many signs of such an event. The day began to grow sultry and oppressive, while the sun was partially veiled in a sickly gauze of cloud. The air, though we were on Dartmoor, seemed exhausted and dead. Cattle herded together under the trees, and from time to time would low restlessly, or, with tails in the air, make hurried excursions, trampling and ill at ease. A few inexperienced young trout were feeding under the river's banks, but the better fish, mysteriously aware that the night would bring with it storm and freshet, made no pretence at a mid-day meal, waiting rather, like the gourmands they were, for dinner. The sport proving thus poor, we abated our ardor, reclined under alders by the stream, smoked, discoursed, and watched a dragon-fly, which gleamed with every color from Iris's paint-box. Presently, General Lynn desired I should accompany him to Bracken Tor, which lay within an easy hour's walk; but having regard for the threatened thunder-storm, I deemed it better to strike homeward, and did so.

We parted as we had met: with friendship, at the bridge.

"Good-day to you," said he; "we may meet next Saturday evening at Tavybridge, for my daughter insists on it that I must be at her concert."

During my return journey I overtook several brethren of the rod, noting in them divers traits of piscatorial character. Young anglers, I find, will never take your word for a thing. They must *see*, or they will not believe, doubtless judging others by themselves. Experienced fishermen, on the contrary, who have had empty baskets often enough and know what they feel like, never show any indecent curiosity or unbelief. They may suspect you are lying if you talk of heavy sport on a day when they have done nothing, but they will rarely ask to see, unless you offer to show.

Coming up with a middle-aged angler, chiefly noticeable for the great size of his creel and his calves, he remarked on the closeness of the weather, and I asked him what he had done.

"Well, I'll tell you the truth," he began. I stopped him pleasantly. I said:

"Don't, if you would rather not. In chance conversations of this kind between fishermen, one hardly looks to hear the truth. By telling it you may be creating a bad precedent."

He seemed surprised; he merely answered:

"Well, I haven't killed a fish to-day."

I begged him to think again before making a tremendous assertion like that. It appeared quite outside the bounds of all probability or experience that a stalwart fly-fisher should angle for hours and have such atrociously bad-fortune.

"If you have not absolutely killed any," I said, "surely you must have caught one or two, or even more."

He admitted that he had taken a few small ones, and let them go again. This encouraged me, and I tried hard to make him admit that he had killed just one or so. But he stuck resolutely to it that he had not.

He was, however, too thorough a sportsman to ignore the value of a little gloss on an anecdote occasionally ; and in order that he might atone for this exaggerated, overdone truthfulness concerning his fishing, he mentioned another favorite amusement of his, treating the particulars of it in a freer spirit and painting with a broad brush.

This was shooting of plover, in which branch of sport the man must have been unapproachable. The number of plover he had killed in his time ran into figures beyond my power to estimate. When shooting plover his rule was never to bring down less than four or five at a discharge. He confessed frankly that sometimes both barrels had only accounted for two or three between them ; but these were reverses that the best shot must occasionally put up with. Plover, he explained, have curious fads which render them easy of acquiring. One may go out to a likely spot and see not so much as the ghost of a plover, in which case a man must simply lie down on his back and kick his heels desperately in the air. This is the one thing a plover cannot stand. If you wave your legs thus aloft, and there is a plover in the country, that bird will come to see the operation. They are mad about it. They will sacrifice home and duty and family interests for a sight of it. They

cluster round in dozens and hundreds, and exchange ideas and criticise, and simply "give themselves away," as modern slang has it. After thus collecting his prey, the sportsman regains that proud position proper to him, fires right and left upon the unfortunate plovers, and simply massacres them.

This is just an unvarnished outline of the sport, but the man who was talking to me treated his subject with such glowing power, and dwelt on his own astounding successes so forcibly, that I envied such a gift of word painting, while feeling at the same time I had yet to meet a truthful sportsman.

It is just the same with all shooting, with scores at cricket, big catches of fish and the weight of them, "times" in running, "breaks" at billiards, and so forth. Distance lends enchantment to the view of these things, and not only enchantment.

The Doctor had already returned when I reached home. He casually pushed together some papers, and shut a blotting-pad on them as I entered. But this did not deceive me; for I know what a man looks like when he has been composing. I could see it in his eyes and in his hair and in the cigarette ends that littered the floor and table.

He was enthusiastic about Miss Lynn and the day he had spent. He thought the concert should make money, and as to talent—well, there was not much about, certainly, but he had secured some, and that good. The landlord of the adjoining inn could, it appeared, warble very efficiently, and was down for a song. The hand-bell ringers were also beaten up,

and declared themselves happy to oblige, though somewhat out of practice, the winter being their great season. My brother had also found a boy with a pretty talent for whistling and imitating song-birds ; while, as a great attraction, two sturdy fellows were to wrestle the best of three falls in the Devon style. There was a raised stage at the school-room where the entertainment would take place, and a little strengthening might make it equal to the wrestlers' needs. Miss Lynn had sent for a piano from Plymouth. She was to play and sing ; and her dearest friend was going to make a first appearance in public with the violin, which she had studied assiduously for six months. The Exponent had volunteered a cornet solo, and sleight-of-hand if they wanted it ; there was a professional coming from Plymouth, no one quite knew in what capacity ; and, lastly, the Doctor would appear twice. He said :

“I think we need one more item on the bill. May I count upon you?”

I told him it would be in the highest degree unsafe to do so, and he did not push the subject then, though I could see he meant returning to it.

After a cup of tea he began saying many things, chiefly concerning Miss Lynn. He assured me that her unaffected, charming, fresh, beautiful way of talking quite fascinated him. He deemed her as clever a “whip” as ever he saw, and fearless, too. She was dressed in white, as far as he remembered, but had not noticed particularly. There was a warmth about her manner that appeared quite want-

ing in other girls. Her eyes *were* violet, not blue. This is an extremely rare color for the human eye, the Doctor explained to me. She had told him the medical profession was a very grand and noble one. She was afraid she did not much like the banjo as far as her experience went, but she knew little of it. Her favorite poet was Scott. Of course Scott had always been my brother's great particular admiration, too. " 'Marmion' and 'The Lady of the Lake' and—and so on, you know—beautiful," said the Doctor. Taste and tact and a certain sprightly humor were, he thought, her strong points. "But the more one sees her, positively the more one finds to admire. She is a human gold-mine," he concluded. I said this was not a happy simile, but he thought it good, because, as he explained, he was speaking of her soul. He added that she was pretty nearly all soul, and seemed to have a way of bringing out the soul in other people. From this and further wild remarks I gather that Miss Lynn has been draining the Doctor's noble spirit out of him like a beautiful vampire.

Later in the evening he grew rather depressed and restless. Whether it was the coming storm, or the fearful difficulty of finding anything to rhyme with "violet," or the fact that his banjo was overdue, or what not, it is impossible to say; but he became morbid and gloomy to a degree I should have believed impossible in one of his sanguine nature. From being on fairly good terms with his annual income, he began to talk slightly of it, and even contemptuously. He said life was all a tangle and a

riddle, and he had never met even a decent, sensible ghost who could give a man the answer to it. Then he rambled out-of-doors, declaring that some thunder and lightning would do him good. But alas! poor Doctor, the lightning has stricken him already, though as yet he hardly knows it. A bolt has fallen from the blue—or the violet.

“Some natures crave a Titanic struggle occasionally,” says Ibsen, and if gigantic warring of elements can furnish peace and hope to unquiet hearts, as, indeed, I know it can sometimes; if the mere survey of these things brings comfort, then there was much abroad which might calm even the troubled Doctor’s soul. A very grand and notable thunder-storm raged that night on Dartmoor, and Tavybridge lay in the heart of it. In fact, we appeared to give birth to the entire atmospheric disturbance. It came from nowhere in particular, but appeared to begin right overhead. The day departed in angry piles of crimson and copper-colored cloud that seemed to crush and smother the sun on his death-bed; and, the monarch once gone, anarchy most dire and universal rushed over earth and sky. It was scarcely night when the first quivering, jagged streak of light tore its way downward, to be almost instantly followed by a growl and a grumble and a rattling, jolting roar of thunder that shook the stout cottage walls, terrified all the dumb beasts, and then subsided, dying hard in the dull echoes of the hills. I followed my brother out, for there promised to be a great exhibition. Now it grew darker than ordi-

nary night, and in a hush before the coming conflict we could hear the sigh of wakening winds, and a strange, mournful murmur, still far distant, but gaining strength. "'Tis the rain," explained mine host of the inn, who was also in the air. "'Tis the rain coming down long, and there'll be a powerful sight of it here soon enough." Then the thunder rolled out of heaven in earnest, and awful sign-manuals of God flamed hither and thither with zigzag of purple and gold. Great sheets of gleaming flame with forked tongues in their hearts swept up the valley, while the barren hills above appeared to breathe fire also, and lightnings flashed upward as well as down. Then with a stupendous crash and a wave of hot air, and a blaze of twisted and twining brilliance that seared the eyeball and stamped itself on the retina, the climax came in tempest and torrent.

I had been admiring my brother for some while. He stood fifty yards away on the meadow. He gazed fearlessly into the heavens, as Ajax probably gazed. But while it is sublime to face lightning, heavy rain appears another matter. There is no particular greatness in getting drenched to the skin for nothing. Neither does any nobility appear in a half-drowned man. Whether rain fell when Ajax scorned the thunder-bolt I know not, but if it did half the magnificence of the spectacle must have vanished. One point is pretty certain, however: Ajax was not wearing a new tweed suit at the time of his adventure, and probably very little of anything that would spoil. But we already know how

the Doctor was dressed, and when the rain began he skipped in with great speed and gave over flouting the storm. Thus the sublime and ridiculous go hand in hand; they are twins, and nice judgment is often needed to say which is which. Taste alone can draw the line, as it does between bathos and pathos, and similar near relations, who, though wide as the poles asunder in their flights, yet so nearly mingle at certain points that to distinguish and define becomes an art.

The storm tore itself to pieces, and showed a thousand effects both wonderful and beautiful in the process. Lightning painted the foliage with unearthly azure, against which the rain fell like a flood of fire, each drop gleaming for a second ere it was lost, and below which the earth sent upward a heavy steam. Then all vanished in darkness, and for a moment, after the thunder, we could hear the hiss of the rain, the tinkle of a thousand new-born rivulets, the heavy spouting and pattering of water from trees and roof-tops.

I was sorry to observe my brother get his camera, and take it out to an open lincay or shed at the bottom of the garden. For a man in love (and as such I now regard him) to go abroad in thunder and be struck by the fire of heaven, and be brought back to his lady charred to a cinder, is fine and tremendous, and would read well either in a newspaper or a novel; but to be destroyed by the electric fluid with your head in a bag or a photographic apparatus is a mean, wretched end. With such a death the

public could not be expected to sympathize ; nor the girl, unless they were absolutely engaged.

However, he had a fancy, in his present stormy state of mind, to go and photograph lightning, so he went, and in one blinding flash I saw him take the cap off. Whether the Doctor had secured that flash, or the flash had secured him and his tripod, I could not immediately be sure ; but presently my anxiety was relieved, for he returned in safety with two pictures, which he said he should send to *Knowledge*, if they came out as he hoped.

So the storm rose and fell and raged. Twice it made as though it was going, and even started, but came back at the last moment. Finally it moved slowly off, with many a distant grumble and streak of fire ; and there arose a cool freshness through the night. A star peeped nervously forth, then another ; the rain stopped, though much foliage rained on, and, save the heavy drip, drip of water from leaf and bough and thatch, there came no sound but the rushing river, grown hoarse with great increase.

CHAPTER XV.

THE LAST FISHING EXCURSION—LOCAL GEOGRAPHY—CLIFFS ABOVE A GREEN SEA—THE DOCTOR'S GREAT SILENCE—CASTLES IN THE AIR—ANOTHER DOG—SIMILES AND METAPHORS—NARCISSUS—THE MAN WITH A GUN—DOG OR FIEND?—THE LONELY INN—ART—A MYSTERY—HEART-RENDING COMPLICATION WITH LOCAL COFFEE.

THE golden sands of pleasure and leisure were fast running out for the Doctor and myself. In fact, some clear twelve hours alone remained to us, for to-morrow would see the village entertainment, and the day following our return to London. From the busy stream of life we have, as it were, beached our boats high and dry for a fortnight, but in three short days we shall launch forth once more.

The Doctor is, as I have hinted, a man of cheerful mind in the concerns of life. Even his present tremendous experience does not render him unreasonable. The thunder-storm has cooled his brain; and this morning, instead of seeking solitude and hating the sight of a near relation, as many in his fix might, he, with greater philosophy, faced existence boldly, and declared that he should accompany me upon a farewell fishing excursion. For this I had marked down on our map some water so remote that an early train would be the first step to reaching it.

And here, before proceeding, I am bound to modify the praise I have just meted out to my brother, for his object in coming with me proved a selfish and malignant one, after all. He came simply that he might *talk*; and he did talk, upon one changeless subject, until in desperation I implored him to let me make a few remarks myself, or else start a fresh topic. He said :

“I thought you were interested, old chap.”

“Certainly,” I answered, “but interest has ceased. I was deeply engrossed and affected for the first two hours or so ; now I am saturated and sick of it. You can have too much of a good thing, as witness a fly in honey. Let me beg of you to leave this absorbing subject for twenty minutes, and then you will come back to it like a giant refreshed. After that brief rest you are sure to find your brain full of beautiful and original ideas, and I will listen patiently, and even applaud if you make any peculiarly choice remark.”

In answer, the Doctor admitted I might be right, and said that he should think a while, for a change ; which resolution taken, he became absolutely dumb while we compassed five miles.

When the train dropped us at a certain spot on the Dartmoor railway, there was a trifling doubt as to our road and its length. We asked three men before leaving the station, and though all agreed about the road, their measurements differed considerably. Two spoke at once, and the disparity of their ideas concerning the walk before us was so

vast that I ventured to smile. Each declared his version to be the correct one, and then the third man cut in and named a number of miles exactly midway between the other statements. We left them at hammer and tongs upon it. All had known the place from boyhood, and could not be mistaken. Finally they grew heated, and sneered at one another's geographical attainments, and wagered pints and pints of Burton ale, each backing his own opinion with this liquid. So we departed, feeling that it would be more practical to set about the walk, and decide for ourselves respecting its length when we reached the other end.

After traversing a valley where forest and meadow mingled, with fields of shining stubble to break the green, we passed a stone bridge that led us under trees and across the stream we should presently fish, where it ran over high ground some miles farther on. Leaving this, we ascended by winding road a hill, from the side of which, when once above the tree-tops, a fine view with some novelty in it towered before us. We saw a rugged mountain, buttressed on precipitous cliffs, that rose over a sea of foliage. Above the gaunt escarpments there climbed a mighty tangle of oak and ash, with the eternal granite peeping through; while, still higher, rounded masses of stone formed the skull of the crag, and about them grew a wind-worn tonsure of blackthorn, in great contrast to the brighter robe of vegetation below. And here I was happy to notice a fact finely observed by Professor Ruskin—viz., the vast dif-

ference in architecture, whether that of nature or man, between a scowl and a frown. A frown may be the sign of power, but a scowl must be the symbol of passion, and, therefore, weakness. These inland cliffs, full of light and darkness, with sunshine and ivy on their breasts, and the wild homes of many a daw and night-bird in their dim hearts — these rocky towers and battlements frowned indeed, and that fearfully under their forest brows and in their gloomy cavities; but it was the frown of strength and potency, the frown of noble giants who rest from their labors, and dream of those mighty forces which brought them into being when the world was young.

About this point of our journey the Doctor's great silence came upon him and it lasted long. There is one among many grand advantages which thinking has over talking: that nobody can contradict you and wrangle and argue. You may maunder on and on and build castles in the air or in Spain or where you will; you may plan your future and assume this fact and take for granted that other possibility and amuse yourself very pleasantly, without the fear of logic, or objection, or practical opposition; which things are sure to crop up if you think aloud in the presence of a fellow-creature. I don't suppose the Doctor is building a castle just now, but I strongly suspect his mind has projected a snug detached house, full of sanitary inventions, with a garden and lawn-tennis court and other reasonable luxuries. A chance incident brought words to his tongue at last.

We were passing fir woods, bordered by the remains of an earthen hedge much broken and shattered, and clad with heath, grasses, and briers, and tunnelled by many rabbits' holes. Suddenly, with a squeak and a struggle, the apparition of a small black dog scrambled from one of these apertures, leaped eagerly in our direction, and behaved as though he had known us for many years. Then my brother spoke. He said :

“This beast must be miles from its home. It has been enjoying some rough-and-tumble sport on its own account, and noticing our rods, will conclude an entire day of hunting lies before it. If we encourage it we shall never see the last of the animal.”

We were therefore harsh to the dog, and told him to go home, or, failing that, elsewhere. He showed great disappointment, and made overtures of friendship first to one of us, and then the other, but nothing availed. My brother was adamant in the matter, and at last the dog sat down sorrowfully in the road and watched our departure. Soon he changed his mind and began to creep after us ; seeing which the Doctor stopped, challenged him to approach at his peril, and managed to get such an amount of gruff brutality into his voice that the dog, fairly alarmed, succumbed again in the road, and to all appearance gave up the struggle. We could still see him, after we had gone forward half a mile, lying a motionless black speck in the distance.

Anything more unsettled and various than the weather that morning I never met with. A rough

wind blew, and the whole moor was alive with little separate hurricanes, which dashed about between intervals of blue sky and sunshine. Many of these miniature tempests fled past, trailing their skirts within a thousand yards of us, but others found us right in their paths, and expended their fury upon our persons. The day, in fact, might have been compared to a lunatic with lucid intervals. I tried this simile on the Doctor with a view to rousing him, for, since defeating the dog, he had grown silent again. I spoke at length upon the subject of similes and metaphors, explained how numerous interesting and attractive fancies might be produced by them, and how they furnished trains of thought, which, if ignited, would often lead to most entertaining explosions. I told him that his favorite poet was full of luminous beauties born of them, and that, to my mind, simile and metaphor were the jewelry of poetry, even as poetry was the jewelry of language. None of these reflections woke him up in the least, and I began to wish that even the dog would return to plague him into conversation, when it absolutely did do so.

We had reached the stream, and were putting our rods up at the time, and the animal, who must have made a *détour* of miles to come at us, popped up again out of some rushes and approached, barking with joy. Neither in accent nor gesture did he make allusion to the past, and I noticed that he had waited for us at a spot where no missile of any kind was available. The Doctor stood in two minds when

this dog thus threw himself upon our good-nature. He admired the beast's cool courage, but resented his obstinacy.

"If we let him stop," he said, "he will have the laugh of us, because those only laugh who win; if, on the other hand, we insist on his going, we shall perhaps feel a secret sense of shame at such churlish conduct to a stranger."

"True," I answered, "and it is possible that he will refuse to leave us. It may be better to give way. There is, however, an element of danger for him in remaining, if he but knew it. Dogs are not allowed with fishermen, and should any official see him, he is likely to be shot or otherwise suppressed; which must reduce his present merriment to a sort of Sardinian laugh on the wrong side of his mouth."

We finally permitted him to stay, and his delight was overwhelming. He tumbled over and over, barked, rushed for frantic excursions of twenty yards or so, tore imaginary rats out of imaginary holes, and endeavored to catch swallows on the wing. After this display of agility, just to give us some idea of the really valuable all-round dog he was, he sobered down, trotted steadily in front of us, just peeping over into the river and barking when he came to any place we particularly wanted to fish. He appeared the worst animal in the world to accompany anglers. There was no thought or judgment or repose about him. His own reflection proved to be this dog's most enduring solace and pleasure. Whether so great a love for his picture in

water-colors was occasioned by conceit or by a belief that the stream contained aquatic dogs who desired to have a game with him, I could not judge. I called him Narcissus, and the Doctor called him something, too ; but he did not care, being evidently accustomed to exaggerated language. Presently a climax came. The dog lost his nerve and his balance at the same moment, fell in off a bank, and went puffing and spluttering down stream into a perfect pool the Doctor was just about to fish. Narcissus paddled with vigor right across and landed at the Doctor's feet, shaking himself with triumphant barks. Then they had a fearful scene. My brother took up great rocks to cast at the dog, and would undoubtedly have stoned it to death had he not been a man of some self-control. As it was he struck the beast hard enough to make him howl and run to heel for ten minutes. But the physical pain wore off and the moral disgrace did not weigh with him, so presently he began to conduct himself as before.

Then, who should suddenly appear but the voluble water-keeper ! We were all extremely glad, and he said that he had been hunting for us through the past ten days. His object was that he might show us the gun he had mentioned and so give us pleasure. We were smitten with admiration at the gun, and he was just giving a demonstration on it, going into choke-bores and so forth, when Narcissus swaggered up to have a look also. The owner of the gun viewed this last arrival gloomily and shook his head.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen," he murmured, "you did ought to know better than that there. Dogs ain't allowed, no how, and your cards sez it."

"Of course they're not," answered the Doctor. "That is just what I've been trying to make this little brute understand. He's no dog of ours."

I said :

"Don't be too sure he is a dog. There's much about him that makes me doubt it. He came out of a rabbit's hole originally, and his behavior since has been both uncanine and uncanny. There are many weird legends about black dogs in this part of the world, and I repeat I cannot think him a true dog."

"We'll see," said the man with the gun, grimly, putting in a cartridge. Things were beginning to look rather bad for the dog, and the little beast grew uneasy himself, I thought. He evidently knew enough of guns to understand that when they were pointed at any living animals and discharged great changes came about. Narcissus sneaked up to the Doctor with all the devil (as far as one could judge) gone out of him. His tail showed an inclination to get between his legs, he whimpered slightly and talked with his eyes. Under these circumstances, though it was weak, considering the contrary nature of the beast, my brother argued for him, and thought the gun rather too severe a test. I said :

"If he is a dog, there can be no doubt you will blow his apology for brains out in half a second ; if, however, he is not a dog but an evil spirit as, I confess, seems likely, then the consequences of opening

fire upon him may be very unpleasant for us all. He would probably change his shape when the shot struck him, and take some diabolic form and rend us with his talons and cast us about to feed crows."

"We are three to one," suggested the Doctor, keeping the argument up gravely.

"What then?" I continued. "The devil is accustomed to much longer odds against him than that, and still holds his own very fairly."

The water-keeper had an idea.

"I'll give 'un both barrels," he declared. "That'll scat 'un to shivers whatever he be made of. I doubt her's only a mongrel dog after all."

He evidently backed his two barrels against any fiend incarnate, and in another half minute Narcissus would very possibly have been "scat to shivers," but Providence had further work for him and sent a substitute. A rabbit scurried away from where he was lying, not twenty yards off, and went loping over the heather in short, sprightly jumps to his burrow. My brother pointed him out, and the keeper, who had his back turned, just found time to wheel round and make a snap-shot which ended bunny's career three feet from home. We applauded this performance, and the sportsman was delighted. He said that snap-shooting was what he could do better than anything. We talked about the great feats he had performed from time to time, and he told us that the scar, which we might perhaps have noticed on his brow, was caused by the explosion of an old-fashioned muzzle-loader, which had gone off when

he was getting through a hedge. We gave him much tobacco, and he said he had heard of the concert at Tavybridge and purposed being there. So we left him, having first luckily learned the way to a little inn not very far distant. We never counted on such a blessing as a hostlery in this remote district, but learning that the thing absolutely existed and was near at hand, we found our appetites grow sharp and the notion of a regular meal pleasant. Narcissus behaved far better after the death of the rabbit. He kept in the background, as became him, and evidently felt himself a wiser dog than he started.

We found the inn, entered it, and observed through a red curtain which partially hid them from vulgar eyes, the landlord and his family just about sitting down to dinner. He bustled forward, took in the situation at a glance, and welcomed us. He was going to carve a duck on the moment of our appearance, but it still awaited him, fat and juicy and innocent of the knife. He declared there was plenty of cold meat in the house for himself and family, and that we must have the duck. His wife supported him in this handsome idea, but the younger members of the circle, four in number, did not press the point, and gazed at us with unconcealed dislike. We refused; we said it would be robbing his home circle, but he took no denial. He implied that if there was any question of robbery, he would see to it himself. He made a favor of it, and conducted us to an upper chamber, and his wife followed with the duck,

so there was nothing to be done but give way and eat it. I asked him to bring the best bottle of wine he could spare, and presently he did so. The Doctor and I agreed that his inferior vintages must have been exciting drinking. But the duck was all a duck should be, as also the junket and cream and the pipe of tobacco which crowned the revel. We asked him afterwards if he could manage coffee. He thought a moment, and then said he could. It would have been wiser and more honorable of the man to decline any attempt in the direction of coffee, but he was on his metal, and evidently deemed the experiment just worth making.

During his absence we inspected an astounding gallery of drawings which adorned the walls of our apartment. They were quite unlike anything we had ever seen before, or even read about in books. One sketch especially struck us as being so absolutely without parallel in the whole history of Art, that to know something of its creator we felt would be desirable. The coffee was long in brewing, and when it finally appeared, we could see, from our host's flushed face and labored breathing, that the resources of the establishment had been exhausted. His wife, I feared, was probably below in a faint. We asked him for a history of his pictures, and he said, with pride, that everybody who called there thought well of them. They had been painted by his grandfather, who never had a single lesson in the art or help from any one while he did them. The subjects were chiefly local, he informed us; and

he was also good enough to explain certain subtle points in the paintings not transparently apparent. Finally, we drew up before the bewildering masterpiece already mentioned. This our guide looked at sadly, and told us how the artist had died suddenly, of an apoplexy, before having time to put the finishing touches. We examined the lamentable production, and instinctively agreed that if ever a man deliberately and suicidally courted sudden death, he who perpetrated this picture did so. A thunder-bolt from heaven must, speaking artistically, have been justifiable. We asked what it represented, or would have represented, had outraged Fate permitted him to complete it. The man confessed he did not know. Opinions upon that question were divided. Personally he inclined to a belief that the concern would have developed into a ship at sea; others thought it had the makings of a portrait about it; while a third party again suspected it was a house, or else still life, or possibly cattle. We talked over it when the owner had gone. I hazarded a theory that it might be an earthquake, and the Doctor thought it was the pictorial result of softening of the brain.

This speculation appeared reasonable, and we turned to the coffee, pleased that such a likely explanation of the picture had come to us. I took a sip and looked at my brother; he sipped also and looked at me. His was a terrible look, and he told me afterwards that my look was pretty shocking also. Then I tried to smile, and he, putting on his

fortiter in re expression, rose to ring the bell. I stopped him. I said :

"They have done their best ; everybody makes mistakes."

"When it comes to mistaking rat poison for coffee," he answered, "I have no disposition to be merciful."

I pointed out that the landlord was an artistic man, and, therefore, probably sensitive. I said :

"It will hurt his feelings fearfully if we leave it in the cups."

The Doctor answered that he should not destroy himself to save a stranger's feelings.

"And I should be the last to suggest such a thing," I replied. "To drink it is, of course, out of the question—we both intend returning to town the day after to-morrow ; but it may be possible to do away with it and leave no sign."

My brother caught the beauty of this idea in a moment. His eagle eye almost immediately afterwards marked down a china bowl on the top of a lofty ancient bookcase. Instantly, with the aid of a chair, he reached this vessel, and transferred the contents of his cup to it before one might count ten. He offered to do the same for me, but I refused. I had invented this clever scheme, and should dispose of my decoction as I thought fit. He went down to pay the bill and left me to carry out the design. Premonitory symptoms of guilt crept over me almost before I began. The room was full of china, but all the pieces struck me as being too conspicuous. I

began to understand what murderers must feel when they have to get the "lifeless flesh and bone" out of the way. I reflected. It seemed absurd to make such a business of it. I even sipped the stuff again, which sip screwed me to the sticking point instantly, and brought an inspiration also. There was a decayed fern in the middle of the table, and it struck me, as a practical gardener in a small way, that what the thing wanted was coffee. "If I give it some," I said to myself, "it may sprout and throw out branches and become a tree-fern and the wonder of the country-side." So I poured in a little, and the languishing vegetable seemed to shake its leaves and ask for more. I gave it more, and a grateful odor rose up and comforted the fern, and the boiling coffee penetrated to its very roots and warmed them and refreshed them. I was just tilting in the melted sugar at the bottom of the cup when somebody knocked at the door. This is always my miserable fortune. I have noticed it throughout life, that if ever I happen to be undertaking any little task in the least out of the common, some meddling soul is sure to surprise me. Why I said "Come in" I have never been able to explain to myself; I meant to say "Stop out." But the landlord, for it was he, accepted the spoken words and entered upon hearing them. His glad smile waned visibly when he saw his fern sending up a column of steam. He seemed more surprised than angry until he grasped the significance of the scene. Then he said it was a fern that wanted the most careful handling, and that he

had been offered considerable sums of money for it by people who knew a good fern when they saw one. He upbraided me and almost wept. I assured him that I understood ferns as well as another, and I added that a little warm liquid, no matter what, was the best thing in the world for a fern so palpably out of order as this. He answered that the abominable fern was merely moulting, or something of that sort, and in a delicate condition, when hot coffee was perhaps as bad for it as anything I could have used. Then I laid a trap for him. I said:

“You mean to imply that I have maliciously poisoned your old fern?”

He admitted that was the idea he wished to convey.

“Then,” said I, “what right had you to send to me, for my own consumption, this highly dangerous beverage? If I tried to poison the fern, and if this stuff would have poisoned the fern, then you tried to poison me, and would have poisoned me if I had not, in self-defence, poisoned the fern. It may not be clear to you, but it is as plain as daylight to me, that you should be arrested. You have decoyed an unsuspecting traveller into your inn with the object of assassinating him. What can you say to that?”

He said the fern was honestly worth a shilling, but he would take ninepence. I gave him sixpence for it, and told him to look after it and tend it and till it, if necessary, against my return some years hence. The scene was practically over, and I had started to leave the room, when as painful and curi-

ous a circumstance as ever I saw forced itself upon our notice. We heard a soft, pattering sound, which grew in intensity, and, looking round, beheld a column of brown liquid—"coffee," the landlord said—falling from the top of a lofty bookcase and spreading upon the carpet below. I don't know that I ever stood in a more awkward position. It was the Doctor's affair, of course, and at first I thought of calling him up to carry it through himself. Then a nobler resolve animated me: I would sacrifice myself and my reputation, such as it was, for a brother. Besides, it appeared better that this landlord should think he had to deal with one lunatic than with two. The man was very angry; I knew he would be; I should have been myself. He said it was strange for so-called gentlemen, etc., etc.; he declared I should pay for the carpet, etc.; he desired to know if I thought it fun, etc.

I answered him upon the whole question.

I said:

"The position is simple and easy of explanation. I will tell you the truth. From foolish wishes to save you pain and not hurt your feelings, I endeavored, by a trifling deception, which chance and a leak in that china bowl have rendered futile, to so dispose of the coffee you sent up that you should think we had drunk it. Our keen consideration for your artistic nature was responsible for all. That you have found out where the coffee actually is amounts to nothing. You now see how we went out of our way to study you, how we showed a kind

thought for you that not one tourist in a hundred would have shown. I do not say that you have entertained angels unawares, but I do say that few angels could have found a more refined and courteous method of studying how to save you pain. No, don't apologize; think no more of it. I, too, will try to put it out of my mind. And one last word: never, never again arrange coffee for anybody. It is not fair to yourself or the public. Few men would have taken it as good-temperedly as we have. It was terrible; it was truly frightful. I should scarcely have thought the world held such a flavor. I had rather been born without the sense of taste than suffered it. I forgive, but can never forget. Good-morning."

I kept it up all the way down-stairs and through the bar parlor and on into the open air, not allowing him time to say a word. The Doctor had gone forward, fortunately, so I started to overtake him.

Altogether this affair appears, as I look at it from a distance, to have been uncomfortable and unseemly. There is evidently a danger in showing hypersensitiveness for other people's feelings. One may put one's self out and plan little kindly actions and so forth, and never get so much as a smile of thanks.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE LAST OF NARCISSUS—BY A WOOD-FIRE—TREATING OF THE DOCTOR'S LITERARY EFFORT IN FIVE PIPES OF TOBACCO—CRITICISM AND WEIRD SCENE OF NOCTURNAL COLLABORATION—THE DREAM AND THE PICTURE—MORE CRITICISM—MY YOUTHFUL LOVE.

I TOLD the Doctor what had occurred, and he explained how he should have acted if the thing had happened to him. He said it would have been better and more morally right to own frankly that I had played the fool and offer to pay for the carpet. Coming from him, I thought this particularly offensive. I said :

“You ruined the carpet ; why don't you go back and pay for it ?”

He feared the matter had gone too far ; he assured me that a little soap and water would put the carpet all right, and so avoided his responsibilities rather meanly.

The fishing to-day was not very effective. We caught a dozen and a half between us, and then determined to start for home and have a wood-fire lighted, and make believe it was winter. The Doctor informed me, with a studied unconcern in his voice, that he wanted to do some private writing, and to-night would be a good opportunity. There

is a sort of rehearsal of the concert to-morrow morning, and Mrs. Lynn and her daughter propose to lunch with us. This last fact the Doctor suddenly announced. He said he had kept it a secret to delight me with when I was least expecting such a thing.

Narcissus now regarded himself as in our service. We started to walk back to the station, and he came too, as a matter of course. I hoped that when we passed the rabbit's hole from which he had originally emerged he might leave us again. And this I desired from no ill-feeling to the dog, because I liked him fairly well, though not well enough to keep. The Doctor said he might come to the station if he was minded to, but no farther. Neither of us proposed paying money for him to travel by rail. We had absolutely reached the platform, and were waiting for the train, when a man, with gaiters and otherwise arrayed in a fashion to suggest he understood horses, claimed the dog. He was noisy, and implied we had tried to secrete the animal from him.

"No such thing," said the Doctor; "don't talk rubbish, sir. The dog was roaming on the moor, and fastened itself to us against our will. We have given it meat and drink, and saved it from being shot, as it richly deserved. If you value the dog, which is hard to understand, you ought to look after him."

The man then thanked us for preserving his dog's life. "Tip," he said, "come here, you little brute," upon which Narcissus, answering to his proper name, reluctantly withdrew.

A vile letter awaited me on our return to Tavy-bridge. In order to explain it, I must tell you that I had recently despatched to my official colleagues a dozen very good trout, neatly packed in river grass and fern. They were not too large to be perfect in the matter of flavor, and not small enough to be ridiculous ; nevertheless, those I regarded as friends acknowledged the gift thus :

“VERY DEAR SIR,—We, the undersigned, beg to thank you for the present of sardines which duly arrived and were eaten yesterday at noon by a committee of six, elected from the various departments. The committee are of opinion that the tinned variety of this fish still holds its own. Congratulating you upon your success, and trusting that the trouble and labor of catching and carrying the victims of your skill is not too great a strain upon your strength,

“We remain, very dear sir,

“Yours faithfully,

“X, Y, and Z (for the staff).”

Now this is supposed to be funny. They expect that I shall laugh when I read it. I have come down here and toiled to catch mountain trout and caught them—all for this. I have endeavored to give other men a passing gleam of pleasure—for this. Humor is very well, but it cannot take the place of gratitude. Never be funny when you ought to be grateful. I did not want thanks, of course ; it was

a privilege to send the fish ; but such a looking of gift trout in the gill has wounded my feelings deeply.

We supped at nine o'clock, had our wood-fire, listened to rough wind and beating rain outside, and prepared for a long, peaceful evening.

The different stages in the Doctor's literary labors, which I now intend to describe, may be counted by the pipes he smoked while engaging in his great conflict. For my own part I read a serious work—the volume I had bought for just such an evening as this. I sucked in mental nourishment from the book with my right eye, and kept the other fixed upon the Doctor.

Pipe one :

He sat and thought and scratched his ear, then drew several little diagrams on his blotting-paper. Suddenly he dashed at the virgin page before him, and wrote a single line with incalculable speed. After this, he flung himself back in his chair, and sighed as if the neck of his task was now broken. He picked up what he had written, and read it critically and punctuated it. There is now no doubt that his work has nothing to do with his profession. He cannot be engaged upon a medical paper, because, at this rate of production, therapeutics generally will have made strides and left the beginning of his essay far behind long before he reaches the end of it. It may be a complicated prescription, but, in that case, the patient for whom it is intended will doubtless come to some conclusion with Nat-

ure ere the Doctor has arranged his combination of drugs.

Pipe two :

More drawing of pictures followed on the lighting of this second pipe. Then he seized what he had written, roughly put his pen through it, and wrote another line underneath. After this he had a slight inspiration, and dashed off two more lines and sighed as before. My presence worried him ; but a man should learn how to compose with other people in the room, so I sat on. He continued to write and cross out. What struck him as excellent when it fell hot from the pen, his maturer judgment of five minutes later invariably rejected. Presently he began on a second sheet of paper, and produced some fancy that evidently annoyed him, for he tore up this second leaf, destroying it on the very threshold of its career. From its remains he fashioned a spill, and lighted

Pipe three :

Now he started printing old English black-letter in an aimless, despondent way, and dropping blots about. Ink has an amazing knack of spreading itself if a man once allows it to get the upperhand. The first modest little excursion is onto a writer's middle finger, from there it works towards the thumb, and if not instantly checked pushes forward to the cuff, and so on to the trousers, coat, face, and hair. If you once get the flavor of ink into your mouth—a thing which happens sometimes—all work had better be given up for the day. You will do no more good

until you have had a bath and won back your self-respect with a clean shirt and pumice-stone. I watched the local ink—a grimy fluid full of foreign bodies—slowly getting the better of my brother. I feared all would soon be over, and had given him up for lost when, without a single note of warning, he hurled himself upon the page before him and wrote with all the speed and splutter of an old literary hand. His quill squeaked and screamed over the paper; his third pipe went out—an excellent sign—and was not relighted. He completed the page and then sat down to read it with an air of power and successful achievement about him. But, as before, the investigation of his work gave him pain rather than pleasure. He consigned further manuscript to the flames, knocked the half-burned tobacco from pipe three and loaded

Pipe four :

I said :

“You are not getting on, old chap.”

He answered :

“No I’m not. I’m doing a thing rather out of my line.”

“A medical affair?”

“Good heavens! I shouldn’t sit here eating quill pens and sprinkling ink about if I was engaged on anything professional. To tell you the plain truth, I’m trying my hand at a bit of verse—a poem, in fact.”

“What kind of poem?”

“Can’t say for the life of me now. It was clear

as daylight when I started, but I fail to see any way out of it at present."

"D'you want ideas?"

"Ideas! Ideas have ruined the thing. I'm full of ideas. I cannot keep them down; they boil out of me and get in each other's way and tangle themselves up and make writing impossible. Besides, look at the ink. Swinburne and Tennyson couldn't do any good with ink like this."

"What is the metre?"

"There's none to speak of. I've given up trying to rhyme ages ago. This is blank verse—awfully easy to write, but doesn't sound much to read somehow. There's a classical sort of ring about it, too—at least, so it struck me. What I want is a kind of chaste amatory poetry, and I can't produce it."

"I suppose I may not see what you have done?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, take my advice and make the thing have rhymes in it. Good rhyme is a cloak that sometimes covers the most naked verses. Not that yours would need covering."

"All very well to talk, but look at the difficulty. Take the word Lynn, for instance. It rhymes with 'gin' and 'sin' and 'bin' and 'grin' and 'inn' and 'twin'—there, how are you going to get chaste poetry out of that?"

"You go about it the wrong way. There is any amount to do to a poem before you begin to write it."

"Well," said the Doctor, generously, "I'll let you help."

"Thanks, old chap."

"Not at all. I have the ideas, I only need a man who can rhyme. Now begin."

He pushed the paper and ink over to me.

"First, what do want?" I asked.

"Something neat and tasteful, and absolutely original. It must be sincere and heart-felt, but not silly. We could introduce Psyche—in fact, I wish Psyche to be introduced; then just a light touch about lawn-tennis, and so forth. And, by-the-bye, I have a rather happy rhyme noted down here: 'nose' and 'suppose'—you might work with that. I couldn't myself, but you might."

"Is that all you have to suggest?" I inquired.

The Doctor looked hurt. He said:

"Hang it, that's enough for one poem. I want it to be quite short: four verses or stanzas, or quatrains, or whatever you call them. If the production makes a hit, then I shall tackle something more ambitious."

"All right. We will try a modest start, and aim at originality, if such a thing still exists. For instance, we might do an 'ode to an elbow,' or to 'ten little toes,' or some other part of the sweet girl that poets habitually overlook."

The Doctor frowned. I do not think he liked my mentioning Miss Lynn's toes; but she has toes—probably delightful toes, for some people's feet are prettier than other people's hands. My brother said:

"Don't begin yet; you have nothing like caught

the spirit I want. This is not to be a funny poem."

"How shall we cast it?" I asked; "in what mould shall it appear? Shall we be quaint or matter-of-fact, sedate or fanciful? Shall we be massive and sublime and cold as sculptured marble, or delicate and subtle and fiery? Shall we be angular with the blazing crookedness of lightning and the abrupt flight of the weird bat, or smooth and soft as the summer murmuring of bees or distant river? What say you to an acrostic or the ringing of stornello changes? Is your command of foreign languages sufficient to warrant a Macaronic medley, or would simple and essentially English verse suit you better? Again, shall we—"

"Oh, shut up," said the Doctor, very rudely; "begin and let the thing shape itself as it will. I don't believe in all this preamble. The matter is more important than the manner. You know exactly what to say; say it in the most beautiful diction at your command."

"I have then to make a poem with Psyche and lawn-tennis and Lucy Lynn?"

"Yes; grand material, too. Poetry should practically write itself, given such a trio of subjects as these."

"And yet it has not," I said, glancing at the Doctor's abortive litter.

"Don't argue," he answered. "I frankly own that nothing which will live has been produced by me up to the present time, but the night is still young;

much may be done by combined effort before dawn."

I did not propose sacrificing hardly-earned rest in the writing of poetry to another man's love. What I hoped to set down would be finished hours and hours before dawn, or not at all. I said:

"It is now midnight, save for five short minutes. This thing must be done before one o'clock, or postponed indefinitely. I am already sleepy, my sense of sight is at fault, my other senses are also growing unreliable. An hour hence, if awake at all, I shall be no better than an imbecile—in a condition when a man might lose all self-control, and even allow himself to write a modern drawing-room song. Let us, therefore, begin at once."

The Doctor lighted pipe five:

I throw a veil over that wild, savage scene of collaboration; that orgy of flying adjectives; that riotous carnival of metaphors and figures; that nocturnal wrestling with rhyme; those bitter and unbrotherly differences, bred out of hot energy and impossible ideas on the one hand, calculating coldness and some sense of proportion and a desire to sleep on the other. The effort reached an end near one o'clock, amid heavy incense of tobacco-smoke, the sacrifice of many sandwiches, and libations of fortified soda-water.

"I've never worked harder in my life," said the Doctor; "this verse-writing is fearful labor. It ought to be better paid. What do you call the thing—an ode or a sonnet?"

"Neither," I explained; "we may describe it as a sort of rondeau, but by no means classical in shape; far from it."

"Oh, a sort of a rondeau; well, I shall never help at another affair of this kind. I feel years older for it."

I fear this effort must not be withheld. You who have heard of the struggle that went to fashion it should, in justice, be presented with the finished article. One thing I would suggest, however: do not criticise; leave that to the Doctor. You shall find he will be far more severe than your charity would ever permit you to be.

"Let us see how it reads from the beginning," said my brother, and thus exhorted, I gave him the entire work, interspersed with yawns.

THE DREAM AND THE PICTURE.

May I whisper the dream of my heart when I saw
A first vision of thee on the day that we met?
Lovely Queen of my hopes and my fears, may I draw
The fair picture I love and can never forget?
'Tis a dear little maid in a garment as white
As the butterfly fluttering over her head—
Poor insect, thou'lt ne'er find a violet so bright
As her soft, sunny eyes, or a rosebud so red
And so sweet as her mouth. She is graceful as thou,
Blessed with beauty more rare than the blushes of spring.
Summer sunbeams are kissing the gold on her brow;
Nature smiles where she moves; at her laugh the birds sing.
Yet all vainly I've striven, for far, far above
This weak pen to portray is that picture supreme!
But a faint, thrilling hope lingers still—oh, my love,
May I whisper the dream?

"How does it strike you?" I inquired.

"Candidly?" he said.

"Of course, candidly. That word 'candidly,' I may tell you, has been the preface to some of the most unpleasant scenes in my life; but in this case you will be practically criticising yourself. I should never have produced the affair unless I had been driven into it."

"Well," he began, "speaking generally, I do not like the poem; it says too much and too little. The first and last lines amount to a proposal, which, of course, is monstrous; the body of the work appears to me cold and artificial. And you have left Psyche out and not alluded even remotely to lawn-tennis. No, I won't pretend I think highly of it."

"As to Psyche," I said, "there is a butterfly in the thing, which is near enough, and lawn-tennis must have been utterly out of place, as you would see if you had not smoked yourself almost idiotic. For my own part I like least the seventh line. White butterflies and violets do not, I fancy, appear at the same time; to talk to a white butterfly of a violet, therefore, is ill-judged; the insect would probably know nothing of that flower."

"Absurd quibble!" said the Doctor. "Great poetry does not deal with nice, curious, idle pettinesses of that sort. One does not look to beetle-hunters or microscopists, or exact, accurate, truthful people, for poetical thought. That's why I came to you. The rondeau, or whatever you call it, has missed fire; not through any mean error that might

be rectified, but entirely and hopelessly. The scope of the thing and the spirit of it are wrong. It couldn't be more lifeless if you had written it for money."

"Be definite," I said ; "to crush is not criticism, or, at best, only unintelligent criticism, which is none."

He made answer :

"The point can be cleared in a dozen words. This poem purports to come from a man in love, but by internal evidence it is easy to see the writer was not in love at all, and that ruins it."

"There you have me," I admitted ; "I am not in love. It is, in fact, many years since I was. If, as you say (who are in love, and therefore a judge) no erotic element is apparent, then we have failed."

"If you have really been in love," said my brother, "there is no doubt you have thoroughly got over it."

"Long years have elapsed since then," I answered ; "the passion did not even tinge my life, but it was a real living thing. I could never love like that again."

The Doctor grew rather interested to find that I, too, had suffered. "Sacred, of course," he murmured ; "not a thing to be talked about."

"On the contrary," I explained to him, "the matter was never a secret. We made love in broad daylight, under the eye of the busy world. We did not spoon in corners or play the fool, like adult lovers. We loved boldly and openly, and pertinaciously wherever and whenever we met. I was six years

old at the time ; she was a spinster of uncertain age : probably four or thereabouts."

"That wasn't love," asserted the Doctor.

"It was," I said, warmly, "and love worth a thousand grown-up affairs. There was no question of family, or means, or prospects, or earthly hinderances. We loved like the cherubs, who are all tangled gold hair and ruby mouths and wings, with no bodies to bother about. I never proposed marriage ; I didn't dream there was such an artificial invention. I did not even know her name ; I don't believe she did herself. But she loved me better than her nurse or anybody in the world, and I felt the same to her."

"Twaddle," said the Doctor.

"You invited the confidence," I answered. "You must now hear all. It is the only romance in my life, or likely to be. We met in summer-time by the yellow sands. We cast glances of mutual admiration at each other, and I introduced myself over a dead starfish. She accepted the starfish and my heart. In half an hour we were living solely for one another. We built castles in the sand—none in the air, for we were purely practical—we erected turrets, dug moats and filled them from the sea. When water became necessary, her attendant would transform my loved one into a small human peg-top. I, too, at these times, doffed stocking and sand-shoe that I might accompany her into the ocean. Hand in hand we faced the great waters ; hand in hand we defied the billows (they were only little summer ripples, I suppose) ; hand in hand we filled our buck-

ets, or, perhaps, with miniature net sought to ensnare the merry shrimp. Occasionally we wandered over sea-weed-covered rocks and under cliffs where there were deep pools with the fragments of shells, bits of frosted glass, crabs' claws, and other things worth keeping. At such times I played Perseus to her Andromeda, rescuing her from defunct jelly-fish and like dangers of the deep. A fortnight of this unutterable joy quickly sped, and then came the crushing end. At the close of that period, her father, whom she had pointed out to me once or twice, reading and smoking upon the beach, thought it proper to nip our young affections in the bud, and return whence he came. I blamed him bitterly at the time, but looking back, I feel more charitable, and have little doubt he knew his own business best. That business probably admitted of no further delay ; so my soul's idol was lost to me. She did not know her address, and even if she had, a love-letter, in spite of what I felt for her, would have cost more sustained labor and anxiety to produce than consolation to send. The next day my world was blank, the yellow sands were desolate, a cruel sea had come by night and washed away our last castle ; and my treasure was not there to build a new one. I thought my heart must break, and it probably would have done so but for a big male friend of mine—a mariner, who offered to take me out in a boat. The pang of that sad separation was thus rendered supportable, but, as you see, I never forgot her. She must be six-and-twenty years old now, may perhaps revisit from time

to time the scenes of her tender youth, or possibly watch the play of fresh little human peg-tops in which she has personal interest. But that she, too, recollects her first courtship by the ocean, I can scarcely suppose ; she was but four, remember, and her sex has been known to forget similar affairs of the heart at even a later age than this."

I looked for some reply to these lengthy recollections, but none came. The Doctor had gone to sleep! Thus love, like hunger and gout and success, renders men egotistical.

CHAPTER XVII.

VARIOUS PRELIMINARIES TO A NOTABLE EVENING — THE EQUILIBRIST—A LAST TROUT—MRS. VALLACK ORGANIZES A BANQUET—PROGRAMMES—EGGS AND BOTTLES—THE DOORS ARE OPENED—GREENROOM MYSTERIES—A FULL AND PARTICULAR ACCOUNT OF THE CELEBRATED TAVYBRIDGE PENNY READING, EMBRACING THE PERFORMERS, THE AUDIENCE, AND THE ULTIMATE ARTISTIC AND PECUNIARY TRIUMPH THEREOF.

“No power of man shall ever induce me to sing at a Penny Reading.”

This strong assertion fell from my lips at breakfast on the morning of the local entertainment; and it was in a measure dragged from me by the repeated importunities of my brother. The professional who was coming in some hazy capacity from Plymouth now writes to regret that private concerns prevent him from doing so. The Doctor thus finds himself an item short on the programme, and, as a result, attacks me with alternate threat and cajolement. I sing a little, quite unambitiously, in private, it is true, but my voice is not a Penny Reading voice, my songs are not Penny Reading songs; and as to “The Death of Nelson,” which the Doctor is now making a dead-set at me about, I would no more presume to enter upon such a classic before an audience that has paid money, or in fact any audience at

all, than I would go and be musical outside a public hostlery. I said :

“I am willing to do any modest service in my power; I cannot undertake impossibilities. I will sit in the ticket-box at the entrance, or see the people to their seats, or call carriages afterwards; I will look after the ventilation, if there is any, or watch the illumination of the stage. That would be valuable aid, because entertainments of this kind frequently catch fire when you least expect or desire them to do so. Again, I might turn over music in a general way for everybody; I might introduce each performer in a few well-chosen words. If you give me a little hammer, I will be the chairman and keep things going, and fill any unforeseen pause with bright conversation. Why, there are thousands of trifles I might do.”

“All the tasks you have mentioned,” answered the Doctor, “with the exception of that undertaken by a chairman, I shall perform myself. Nothing must be left to chance. A chairman would fall into one of two mistakes: either vulgarize the entire performance, or else make it prosy and dull. No, you can only help by appearing in the programme. You may recite or sing, or ‘vamp’ on the piano, if you think you have the nerve for it, or anything you like. Surely a man of your age, with some education and experience of life in cities, is equal to amusing a thick-headed crowd of laborers for five or six minutes. You know you are.”

“I might do some quaint feats with lawn-tennis

balls," I ventured to suggest. "A little juggling perhaps would please them."

The Doctor's face fell. He was too polite to say anything; in fact he could not, for he had just given me a free hand; but he looked much. Finally, seeing I was waiting for his opinion on this idea of mine, he spoke. He said:

"You don't think such a display would be beneath you, old man?"

"Not a bit, old chap," I answered, cheerily. "I'm far from proud. If you permit yourself to play a banjo, who am I that I should set myself up and endeavor to do anything in the least high-class?"

"You need not be offensive," he said. "Princes play the banjo, and it is a beautiful instrument rightly understood; but I have yet to learn that feats with knives and balls, or exhibitions of manual dexterity involving candles and wineglasses are socially desirable or possible. I suppose you will want a dirty little square of old carpet, and a pair of 'tights,' and spangles on your chest, and other low surroundings. If you propose to use wineglasses or anything that will probably be broken before you have done with it, you must buy them yourself."

I said:

"Leave me to see about the performance. I shall not appear in 'tights,' though I may remark that that is no worse than bursting on an audience with a black face and a movable wig, which is a thing I have known you to do before to-day. Let us avoid recrimination. I shall use new-laid eggs chiefly in

my entertainment. If these break, as may happen, I can injure nobody. My apparatus will further consist of empty black bottles."

"You must take the consequences, that's all," said the Doctor. "You have never performed in public, to my knowledge, and it is quite a different matter doing tricks to amuse your family on Christmas night, after everybody has dined and will be pleased with any foolery, to performing before critical strangers who want their money's worth. There will be Justices of the Peace in the audience, too."

"You won't alarm me," I said. "When I once get wound up to carry a fantastic thing of this kind through, the devil himself would not frighten me out of it. Recollect it has been thrust upon me. I did not seek the fame and reputation that I shall probably win to-night. If your show falls flat, and the violin-player fails, and so on, and I and my eggs and bottles take the house by storm, you will have yourself to thank for it, not me. I merely bargain for a good place in the second half of the programme, and that the stage-door shall be left open, so that in case of any misunderstanding or *contretemps*, it will not be necessary for me to loiter about in the hall explaining."

"I shall call you an Equilibrist in the bill," said the Doctor, gloomily; "and recollect," he added, "that your performance must only last five minutes at the outside. When I say, 'Come off,' you'll have to come."

Then finishing his breakfast, he strolled out to

look at the preparations, and see how the stage was getting on. I may here say of the Doctor, that he is honestly a very good public entertainer. He has been constantly taken for a professional performer; I can remember the time when his services were in considerable demand, and when he certainly made more out of his banjo than his calling. But that was in the days of his hospital career, when he lacked his present liberal qualifications for healing and mending in every direction. In the past he could unbend the bow as well as another. Upon occasion he would don what is popularly supposed to be Ethiopian attire, and speak about "De Massa" and "Brudder Bones" and "De gals," and so forth; he would also sing grotesque melodies, and roll his eyes, and wear boots many sizes too large—all very amusing and excellently well done. Now, however, his performances are of a different character. He produces his effects in modern evening-dress, and appears of the color he was born. He gets marvellous results from the banjo, imitates cattle and crowing of cocks, and such matters; while at times he plays through pieces of proper printed music, which is in itself an impressive and convincing thing to see done. That he will succeed to-night, and get "encores" and other manifestations of approval, there can be no ground for doubt. But there is little reason to anticipate anything of the kind for me. "No matter," I said to myself; "to-morrow sees the last of me here, and these Devon folks bear no malice."

The Doctor had now made an end of fishing. His

time until the day was done would be far too valuable to squander in amusement of any sort. But I, while purposing great preparations for my own share in the entertainment, saw no reason to begin them until the afternoon. Two hours remained to me, and these I filled with a last brief angling expedition on the home stream. Nothing much came of it, probably because I fished without concentration, but a languid melancholy, rather, and no particular desire to kill. To such lengths, indeed, did I carry these aimless efforts, that when, with a cast that was destined to be a final one, I caught a trout of reasonable size, I weakly permitted him to depart whither he came, feeling that one trout more or less was of no consequence, and determining that as my first fish had been spared, even so should my last. Then I packed up the gear and placed my inestimable rod within its case for a long rest, the duration of which none might foretell.

I had always suspected that the Doctor exercised much greater power with our landlady than was at any time possible for me, and on returning to lunch all doubt upon the question vanished. The preparations for our meal appeared absolutely regal. There were napkin-rings and salt-spoons, and hyperbolic refinements of that kind that fairly took my breath away. There were cut-glass dishes fringed with leaves, and separate cruets, and a red wineglass and two green ones. Give me a green wineglass if you want style. The dessert fascinated me. There were nut-crackers with it, and an air of solid capital and

lavish expenditure that black grapes and three-cornered nuts invariably engender in my mind. The landlady was putting finishing touches when I entered, and smiled at seeing me quite overcome. I said :

“Dear, bless my life, madam ! what banquet is this?”

“Mrs. Lynn and her daughter do lunch along of us to-day,” she explained. “I knew as how your brother would like to see what I can do if I’m put to it.”

“It is grand and astounding and amazing,” I declared. “Why, the very wasps are sobered. I see them walking about in those plums, whispering under their breath to one another, and polishing themselves up to do everything justice. I had no notion you could arrange a table of this kind. I wish I had known more of your resources, for I should then have asked for those salt-spoons sooner. A salt-spoon is a thing I have almost a passion for.”

The lunch was a great success. Mrs. Lynn had the red wine-glass, the Doctor and Miss Lynn shared the green ones. I had none, which to a certain extent ruined my personal pleasure, but I tried not to show it. Conversation ran upon the concert. The pocket Whiteley, ever in the van of human progress, has been found to possess some invention by which a lithographed programme will be possible. The Doctor has purchased the entire apparatus, with paper and purple ink, and speaks hopefully. Programmes, as Miss Lynn says, will be an additional

source of income to the performance, and I suggest, having regard to these subtle, reproductive, indelible inks, that the Doctor may at the last moment appear as a purple Doctor, which, if it gets about, will also draw money.

I gather that there is to be a duet between the banjo and the Doctor on one hand, and Miss Lynn and the piano from Plymouth on the other. This has been rehearsed during the morning, and, it is believed, will attract. Much may come of a duet in many directions.

The concert was timed for eight, and it now being two o'clock, I determined to begin cultivating such equilibristic talent as I might possess without delay. We saw the ladies drive off; my brother hurried to the privacy of his chamber with the lithographic paraphernalia; I, not daring to tell Mrs. Vallack upon what desperate business I was engaged, merely begged the loan of some empty bottles at once, and let her know that I should require about a dozen eggs later on. I very nearly asked her to boil them hard. This would much have simplified my coming labors, but the great beauty of feats with eggs is to break them afterwards, so the audience may see your skill is genuine. I removed the bottles into the open air, as being more roomy; hid myself with them in a tangled wood, where none but birds and beasts could behold the display, and practised. The results were reasonably gratifying, and after an hour's exertion I almost regretted that I had not taken this occupation up professionally.

If, perchance, I had been born the son of a circus clown or wild beast proprietor, I had probably entered the arena in youth, and this natural bent for keeping empty bottles flying about in the air might have been developed and ended in fame. I returned heated and confident ; I even for a moment dreamed of borrowing the landlady's colored wineglasses, but put the idea away as both dangerous and unprincipled. If she lent them to me in ignorance, and I was unfortunate with one of them under the glare of the public eye, she would probably abuse me before the audience, and cause a painful hitch in what might otherwise be a perfectly successful affair.

The Doctor had prepared no less than one hundred programmes. The earlier impressions were very beautiful and fairly legible, but the last five-and-twenty looked like ghosts, as though they had been all right once, but suffered since from some great terror. My brother was printed all over with scraps of information about the concert. These bills of the entertainment will be sold for threepence and a penny. The "artists' proofs," so to speak, are expected to command the larger sum ; the pale, haggard-looking programmes will go more cheaply.

At seven o'clock the Doctor, having tuned his banjo to a nicety, placed it in the case and marched off to the hall. Doors open at half-past seven, and he, of course, must be firmly seated in the ticket-office before that great moment with his "passes" and myrmidons and other necessities about him. A

quarter before eight I strolled down to the place of entertainment, and bestowed my eggs and bottles safely in the "greenroom." Here, whom should I meet but our old friend the Exponent! He had undertaken to play a cornet and conjure, and the prospect of these combined displays caused him great uneasiness. When he heard what I was going to do, it cheered him. "We must both hope for the best," he said. Miss Lynn's friend was already prostrate with terror at the thought of what lay before her. She had, moreover, lost her music entirely, and rather fancied it was now in a train rushing into Cornwall. General Lynn had sent over a hamper of cooling drinks for the performers, and I suggested a glass of champagne for the fair violinist. The Exponent, who gained confidence from the misery of others, said he failed to see how champagne would take the place of music, when it came to actually going on the stage; which was in a measure true, but utterly demoralized the performer. The Bell-ringers were there in Sunday raiment. They feared nothing, being used to public exhibitions of their skill; whether they would like being called Campanologists remained to be seen.

I then went round to learn how matters were progressing elsewhere. A goodly audience trooped steadily in, and the Doctor was taking the money and issuing directions. He refused to recognize me for some paltry reason. I resented this pride of place.

"Things going all right?" I asked. He answered:

“Pass along, please; pass along! Don’t block the gangway.”

The Lynns had arrived and taken front seats. There were clergymen with them. The house filled rapidly. The boy Blank was getting the audience nicely seated; his friend Jones vended programmes and moved about with a pleasant jingle of copper coin. These efforts on his part will qualify him for entrance to the “greenroom”—a thing to be regretted. The stage was beautifully decorated with ferns and flowers. Miss Lynn and the pocket Whiteley had seen to this. I noted that if anything went wrong with my own performance, the high-priced seat-holders would be bound to suffer, whereas the cheaper parts of the house might escape. Personally, I should be able to get clear off through a side door. At eight o’clock the building was quite full and the programmes all sold. The Doctor then relinquished his post, told the policeman at the entrance to charge sixpence a head for the remaining standing room, emptied the boy Jones of his copper hoard, and came “behind” laden with capital. This he counted while the first item of the entertainment was in progress. Of the concert it is only fair to those concerned that I should mention none or all. Selection in such a case would be as odious as comparison. I have private opinions concerning the affair, but desire to record facts rather than criticise failings. Critics give an audience greater credit for judgment than they often confess, and are more influenced by the public than the public knows. In

this case results were entirely happy, and I shall therefore assume the performance was meritorious.

A brief note of each item and its effect may here be appended :

No. 1. Song, "The Wolf."

This was rendered by our semi-detached friend, the landlord of the inn. Its success appeared great, and would have been greater had not Miss Lynn kindly played the accompaniment. This unhappily produced a suggestion of raggedness, because the singer introduced certain novelties into his song which the composer had neither foreseen nor provided for. The jovial Bung never sang from music himself, and was unaccustomed to any instrumental aid. Miss Lynn, however, did wondrous well, appeared to know pretty much where the vocalist was going, and generally had some piano-forte background for even his wildest innovations. Effect: Applause.

No. 2. Piano Solo, "Grand Polonaise in A Flat."

Miss Lynn was responsible for this, and played with brilliancy, the only thing in the least flat about her performance being the key. The Doctor turned over the pages, apparently at the right times, and bowed her off afterwards. Effect: Magnificent. Loud and sustained applause, and an encore only avoided because the Bell-ringers marched on to the stage too soon.

No. 3. Campanology.

The low-priced seat-holders were disappointed when they saw their personal friends appear. What

they had expected none knew, but nothing would have surprised them. A troupe of trained Mastodons, introduced by the Doctor, might have been greeted with pleasure; the Bell-ringers' well-worn melodies produced very little. Effect: Hearty clapping of hands from the stalls, neutrality from the pit, stolid and absolute indifference on the part of the entertainers.

No. 4. Banjo Solo, "Scotch Medley."

The Doctor came forward with a chair in one hand, his banjo in the other. He bowed, sat down, and plunged into a most intricate affair unquestionably Scotch in nature, with a suggestion of a hundred airs about it. He ended by imitating a bagpipe drone so admirably that one of the clergymen, who was very young, and went by the name of Mac-Tavish (though a Church of England man) arose, boiling over with patriotism, and gave utterance to short ejaculations that one connects with reels and sword-dances and whiskey. The Doctor assured us afterwards he had never received such a compliment. Effect: An encore. This produced a comic song, which in turn was responsible for loud applause. Mrs. Lynn told me she had no idea the banjo could be played with such refinement.

No. 5. Whistling by local boy.

A very clever and original performance. The boy produced extraordinary sounds, and had the makings of a ventriloquist about him. He first suggested the notes of thrushes and blackbirds and robins and larks, and other less known songsters; he then made

the noise of a handsaw and a plane, and a blacksmith hammering. He concluded by nearly choking himself in an endeavor to imitate fowls and ducks, and the braying of an ass. It was altogether a curious and interesting example of unexpected talent in an odd direction. Effect: General applause, maintained by the boy's private friends at the back of the hall until the policeman stopped it.

No. 6. Cornet Solo, "The Lost Chord."

Our Exponent electrified everybody and did well. He perhaps lacked artistic modulation and light and shade, but he played clearly and very loudly, and found the lost chord on a penetrating note at the end of the piece, which gave several ladies a headache for days, as I afterwards heard. Effect: Well-earned applause. An encore was demanded but refused, because the Exponent said he rather thought he had strained himself somewhere internally just on the final blast.

This concluded the first half of the concert, and a respite of ten minutes followed, in which most of the men went out to refresh. The Doctor was at the entrance and handed slips of card-board to those who intended returning and seeing the entertainment through, as, of course, everybody did. General Lynn and a select party came into the "greenroom" to congratulate those who had already performed and encourage those whose turn was to come. The Doctor appeared to be everywhere; now talking to Miss Lynn; now collecting slips again, as the audience returned; now putting courage into the lady

violinist, who had found her music and mislaid her resin; now once more talking to Miss Lynn; now quelling a lad with nuts at the end of the hall; now drinking a glass of something; now explaining his banjo to one of General Lynn's friends; now, yet a third time, talking to Miss Lynn, and so forth. The second half of the show began with violin playing, and was slightly delayed because, though the resin ultimately reappeared, the fiddle-bow almost immediately afterwards vanished. At length, however, everything necessary to the performance was collected, including the performer. The Doctor brought forward the music-stand; Miss Lynn played the accompaniment.

No. 7. Violin Obligato.

I forget the name of it, but "K" was the prevailing letter. It came originally from Russia, and at least one person in the room—she most involved—wished it had stopped there. Now the Doctor made his first mistake, and overreached himself. He tried to turn the music for both piano and violin and failed. Everybody tells him that he can be in two places at once, and he foolishly begins to believe it of himself; hence his error. He leaped backward and forward throughout the entire length of the obligato, dazzled the audience, and bewildered the performers. Afterwards the violinist told me that her fingers had all felt like thumbs in worsted gloves, that the room swam round her, that she did not know which hand held the fiddle and which the bow, or where the music was. If this really repre-

sented her state of mind, she certainly, under the circumstances, played well. Effect: A sufficiency of applause, and attempts from the uncultured to encore the Doctor.

No. 8. Equilibrism or Jugglery.

A youngish man came forward, took off his coat and put down a basket, which, at first sight, appeared to contain pickings from a rubbish heap. He sought out three empty bottles. These he balanced by the neck and flung about in the air and caught ere they reached the ground. Finally a bottle, spurning all sort of discipline, broke away from the youngish man and bounded lightly into the stalls. It sought out a minister of the Church with intention to brain him, but he escaped by a hair-breadth; the bottle fell frustrated and rolled away out of sight. Then the youngish man began breaking fowls' eggs with easy confidence in endeavors to fling them into the air and catch them on a plate. After this display the atmosphere grew thick with eggs, which the youngish man kept revolving round him until one went the way of the others and put out a foot-light. Finally, after rummaging in his basket, he brought forward three or four huge soup-plates and some short sticks. Then people in the front row began edging away and whispering nervously to one another, while a voice, hoarse with anguish, was distinctly heard to say: "Come off, you're ruining everything." But the plates and sticks were fairly amenable, and seemed to be liked. Then the youngish man bowed and departed, taking

some of his properties with him, and an attendant followed to sweep up what remained. Effect: Relieved applause, with silent prayers of thankfulness in the front of the house that all had ended well, and there were no vacant places to mourn for.

No. 9. Duet, Banjo and Piano-forte.

This was undoubtedly the hit of the evening. The Doctor and Miss Lynn played *con amore*, and the entire audience applauded in the same way. Effect: A rapturous encore, twice repeated, with cheers and stamping of feet and whistling. I repeat, much may come of a duet.

No. 10. Necromancy by the Exponent.

This was no feeble, modern sleight of hand, but your real, old, mediæval Black Art. The Exponent dressed up in some of General Lynn's Indian curiosities. He looked to be full of pockets and secret receptacles of every kind, and had all the appearance of an esoteric Buddhist out for a holiday. He lighted red-fire and ate candles, and burned Mrs. Lynn's pocket-handkerchief and then gave her back a bouquet of paper flowers, which all thought clever, excepting Mrs. Lynn. After this he condescended to tricks with cards, and suddenly produced twenty feet of red ribbon out of his mouth, an achievement that interested everybody, delighted many, and disgusted not a few. He then borrowed a shilling and returned it in pennies—a thing I have seen done by ordinary business people who never knew they were conjuring; and he ended the seance by trying to delude us as to the exact whereabouts of a lump of

sugar, which he worked about under three tin cups. In this attempt he repeatedly mystified himself, but never left the audience in doubt for a moment—a clever and original idea. Effect: Genuine applause from everybody but Mrs. Lynn, who had secretly hoped to get her pocket-handkerchief back up to the last moment, but failed to do so. The Exponent told me afterwards that he had purposed performing a most intricate deception with a canary of his sister's. But the bird showed such dislike to coming, and distrust of him, that its owner refused either to bring it or allow it to be brought.

No. 11. The best of three falls in wrestling: Devon style.

This fell through. Two hardy young fellows, in regulation jackets, appeared to take part in the bout, but the stage was found altogether unequal to their needs. In fact, had they got into holds and begun, they might possibly have brought, not only the stage, but the entire building, roof and walls, to the ground. Effect: Great disappointment and disorder at the back of the hall, during which the policeman lost his head.

No. 12. A few remarks from the Vicar.

This amiable old man's first word caused all disorder to cease. He thanked everybody, both before and behind the foot-lights. He praised the performers for performing, and the audience for coming to see them. He declared the entertainment would long be remembered, and added that, allowing for expenses, it had produced a clear monetary gain to

the deserving charity in question of £4 3s. 8d. Effect: Cheers, and an air of profound astonishment, among the baser sort, that mere music and such varied trifling as they had beheld could command this solid return.

Then Miss Lynn, the Doctor, and the Exponent performed "God Save the Queen" on piano, banjo, and cornet respectively. They wanted the violinist to swell the band, and she would gladly have done so, being now a hardened public performer, but unfortunately, in the final hurry and excitement, she missed her fiddle, and did not find it again until the National Anthem was gloriously concluded.

Then wraps and congratulations and hand-shakings, and trampling of feet, and lanterns and carriages, and extinguishing of lights and hurryings to and fro, and overturning of chairs and roistering shoutings down the narrow lanes outside, and, finally, darkness and peaceful silence.

Tavybridge sleeps in cottages and homesteads, and neighborly stately mansions; sleeps on forest borders, hearing no rustling leaves; on stream margins, heeding no murmur of ripples. Entertainer and entertained, rich and poor, sad and happy, each seeks sooner or later his unconscious rest; slumber, like death, levelling them all.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MIND OF MAN—THE DOCTOR'S TELESCOPIC MENTAL APPARATUS—THE LAST OF THE HOME STREAM—A COMPANY FOR THE EXTRACTION OF SILVER LININGS FROM CLOUDS—GOOD-BYE TO TAVYBRIDGE — THE DOCTOR'S MISERY AND DESPAIR—VALE!—A VISION OF WINTER AND A THOUGHT OF SPRING—CONCLUSION.

SOME minds are like telescopes, others appear of a microscopic order, while a third class of intellects, fortunately growing rarer, like Euclid's definition of a point, have neither parts nor magnitude. The far-seeing, comprehensive mind enjoys certain breadth and scope and sweep perhaps denied to him who magnifies small concerns and them alone; but to see an inch or two before your nose, and that with absolute clearness, is an enviable accomplishment arguing fine results, for many inches make a mile, and Life, with provoking philosophy, places the goal of small things achieved far above that of grand things just missed. The telescopic intellect, however, glories in certain pleasures of conception only to be known by kindred minds. The tortoise beat the hare, it is true; but the hare appears to me to have had the pleasanter journey of it while the race progressed. He showed what he *could* do; he sped like a flash of lightning, he appreciated the scenery, and doubtless

thanked his Maker, from time to time, that he was born a hare, not a tortoise. He certainly lost the match, but was the tortoise sportsman enough to risk a second encounter? No. He knew his victory was a fluke and a tremendous piece of luck. Nor have the bright, erratic human intellects an opportunity of trying again here, for life is short; but in the next world, maybe, Providence will give them another chance, in which case I should back them with my last coin.

These reflections (which would need a great deal more expansion than I can give them at present to become reasonable) were produced by a remark made by the Doctor.

His mind is distinctly, and additionally under present conditions, telescopic. He allows a certain defined margin for the changes and chances of life, but such limitations to human action do not prevent him from focussing the future with piercing distinctness, or from planning and plotting, on a heroic scale, the time to come.

Clad in the garb of cities, my brother and I are sadly pacing the bank of the home stream for the last time. Mid-day will see an iron horse steam into the little station of Tavybridge, and, ere the high-metalled creature starts again on his career, the Doctor and myself, and our baggage and fishing-rods and clover-honey and banjo and baskets of ferns and photographic apparatus will all be ensconced behind him.

What the Doctor said was this:

“When I take a bigger place and become a fami-

ly man, and secure the cream of the practice in my neighborhood, I shall hope to see a great deal of you, old chap."

This expression of fraternal feeling was very gratifying to me, and I thanked him for his offer, promising, when his expectations were realized, to accept the invitation.

We sauntered to see certain favorite nooks and vistas. The trout to-day rose in a manner highly flattering to us, because it showed what a general, reckless feeling of security our departure had produced in their minds. They did not sneer and flout us now they knew our power was over; they did not rise and curse us for destroying their fathers, mothers, and connections; they simply ignored us.

And here I shall touch upon a fancy that came to me as my eyes wandered over the dark shadows of rain-clouds fringed with silver and gold. I shall dwell upon the conceit for two reasons: first, because I like it; and, secondly, because it has the most optimistic tendency, and is therefore to be admired, coming from a man who has just finished all the holiday he will get for twelve months.

It struck me that the promotion of a "Company for the Extraction of Silver Linings from Clouds" might do the State some service. The Memoranda of Association would, if I drew them out, appear on the following lines:

1. The name of the Company to be "The Optimistic Silver Searchers, Unlimited."

2. The offices of the Company to be erected in the hearts of the share-holders.

3. The Company to be instituted for the appended reasons :

(*a.*) The finding of light in dark places. Much of this light is believed to exist under circumstances of the most adverse nature ; and it is emphatically hoped that it will be possible to produce it in quantities not only sufficient to justify the initial trifling cost of working, but also to furnish fine results, both for the individual and the community.

(*b.*) It is to be noted that the value of the shares must depend entirely upon the holder of them ; and, by a strange paradox, he who, after diligently investigating his own dark clouds, finds therein sufficient silver to allow of some overflowing into the poorer cloud-land of a neighbor, will reap the greatest advantage.

Note.—It must not be supposed that this latent Silver Lining appears of the same hue and quality and value to all. Experience is necessary both to judge the true metal and reject the false. It is desirable to work with system and know exactly what you want to find before you begin your search. And envy no other man's holding, for the flaming, cloudy palace which, on the face of it, represents, as you believe, your soul's ambition, may be to its owner no more than the dark and cheerless habitation of his life, a cloud-mine, hidden in which he, too, la-

bors, seeking and sighing for silver you know not of.

(c.) It is by comparison, and often by that alone, that a right estimate of the real value of your own possessions can be come at. Thus a healthy man has silver in his cloud ; a man who can work, and can get work, has silver in his cloud ; a man who can say, "I have one to love me," has silver in his cloud and gold.

(d.) He who, after diligent search and toil, finds no solitary vein of silver either in things past, present, or to come, should seek a brother even more poorly furnished than himself ; who, if he find, as he certainly shall, will prove no cloud is so black but it might be blacker.

(e.) The silver is, in fact, suspected to be ubiquitous and deliberately provided by the Supreme Will.

"It spreadeth forth for flight the eagle's wings
What time she beareth home her prey ; it sends
The she-wolf to her cubs ; for unloved things
It findeth food and friends."

(f.) Fire and crucible will frequently be necessary before a lode of silver can be recognized for what it is ; and human ignorance is apt to generate so base an alloy that of what might have been a property of infinite worth only the wreck and scant remainder can oftentimes be saved.

(g.) Of the nature and subtle, protean forms

of this unknown wealth, spread throughout the nations of the earth, the learned differ, some altogether denying its existence. But let the Silver Searcher know this : The Essence he seeks is Divine ; It works through darkness up to light ; It breeds good out of elemental chaos ; It hangs silver Hope higher than the last jagged peak of earthly sorrow : It fringes human agonies with a great glory of immortal possibilities beyond.

I will issue the Prospectus of my concern when I have made some inquiries among business men as to its chance in the market.

And now our time flies fast ; we return to the cottage and prepare to bid farewell to all the different human beings and beasts and feathered fowls that have contributed to our pleasure through the past fortnight. Mrs. Vallack, without telling us, has prepared yellow pasties, full of saffron, which are likely to be a great source of comfort in the train. We have also fruits, and the Doctor will buy his usual railway refreshment at Exeter. Our landlady, as I have already explained, possesses certain information respecting the end of the world denied to most of our fellow-creatures. One thing, however, we learned upon this subject when bidding her good-bye : that another twelve months of mundane existence is assured for those whom Death will leave alone. The world is to last a certain year longer, because Mrs. Vallack told us that, should we need her apartments next

autumn, it would be well to write not later than June to secure them. She quite thawed to me, and even hoped we might meet again, but her heartiest expressions of regard were reserved for the Doctor. Him she parted with most unwillingly. She told him that, since the concert last night, a very general admiration for him had arisen in Tavybridge ; and she ventured to predict that did he set up a red lamp and brass plate here, he must from the first have all the leading tradesmen, farmers, and lodging-house keepers at his mercy. The Doctor assured her he would like nothing better, but there were certain objections. Dartmoor, to tell the truth, offers but few professional advantages for medical men. Nature and the fine air, and the healthy lives of those who dwell in that favored land, scarcely give sufficient chances to a doctor. Occasional epidemics of old age occur, but Death prescribes for them, and no medical genius has as yet bettered his prescription. Indeed, Life itself, as bitter-hearted people will tell you, is a disease. But how few of your pessimists are prepared to take a dose of church-yard mould, the sure specific for it !

The cat, forgetting himself in the excitement of our departure, came as far as the gate with us—a creditable sacrifice on his part, for he was sleeping when we left, and the Doctor woke him to say good-bye. Mr. Vallack awaited us at the station. He had kindly snatched a few moments from his shunting operation to bring down a truck for our luggage, and his honest face and broad smile were the last

things we saw as we sped away. At the Bracken Tor station we met General Lynn and his daughter. They were going up to Exeter for the day, and sympathized with the condition we must be in at having to leave such a place as Dartmoor for such a place as London. For them the picture of life in cities possessed no attractions. The Doctor entered into an arrangement with Miss Lynn to secure for her the finest lawn-tennis racket that Tate's master-hand could produce. So we parted from them at Exeter amid universal declarations of good-will, and the Doctor mourned so terribly that he quite forgot to buy a bottle of champagne, and showed not the least interest in finding out where the London train started from.

He continued in a saturnine vein for about one hundred miles of the journey home. He spoke hopelessly of the Devonshire cream. He said that when it got into Somersetshire air it would undoubtedly turn sour. Concerning the ferns, he feared they could not be expected to weather a winter in Middlesex. They might be already dying in the luggage-van. Yes, he felt well himself, he admitted, but the danger of these angling expeditions was that rheumatism so often set in months afterwards. Rheumatism, he told me, took immense periods of time to germinate in the system. If he was going to get rheumatism, of course there was an end of all his hopes and ambitions at once. He might as well drive straight from Paddington to the workhouse. He ate a saffron pasty and said he feared all must be over, for the thing was not a pleasure to him, and

loss of appetite invariably foretold internal disaster of some sort. He presently dragged out our attempt at a poem and read it through despondently. Then he lighted a cigar and took exception to my cheerful demeanor. He said:

“Why the deuce aren’t you miserable?”

“Why should I be?” I answered. “I have just completed a fortnight of my life admirable in every way. I have killed trout in numbers beyond my most sanguine expectations; have enjoyed your society (which was pleasurable enough at first); made friends, acquired health. What is there to be miserable about? Moreover, in your case, there are certain added gratifications entirely lacking in mine.”

“Exactly,” said the Doctor; “and it is that—it is the uncertainty, the alternations between doubt and hope, distraction and delight, which have reduced me to my present condition. One reflection is almost insupportable: I might have photographed her after lunch yesterday, and, like the dolt and idiot I am, never thought of it.”

“One of us should certainly have had the idea,” I said.

“Of course—the most obvious thing that could have occurred to any average intellect. If I imagined that you *did* think of such a matter and never told me, it would make a barrier between us for life.”

My brother is now becoming incoherent under his sufferings. I shall not condescend to answer this last remark. He will himself be the first to regret it when reason reasserts its sway.

For myself, I grew busy with the wild land I had left. It appeared only right and proper that some sort of formal farewell should be made unto it—a kindly farewell, embracing both gratitude and regard. Dartmoor had done much for me; there was little enough that I could produce in return. A brief valedictory ode seemed the most reasonable form of offering, and, though meagre and inadequate and quite beneath the dignity of the subject, I must reproduce it, because it rightly belongs to this book.

VALE!

I.

Farewell to thy manifold glories and graces,
Thou heart of sweet Devon so wild and so free;
Farewell to the peace and the soft resting-places,
My short, sunny leisure owes solely to thee.
Farewell, oh, farewell,
For none may foretell
If a vision of rainbow-clad mountain and fell
(As Memory yet in her dreams dimly traces)
Shall ever again be extended to me.

II.

Farewell, lofty tors, in your proud desolation,
Of purple and gold under gray granite crowns;
Whose kingdoms extend 'neath each throne's elevation
And valleys still smile, though the lord of them frowns.
Farewell, oh, farewell,
To slumbering dell,
To the soft stealing music of river and bell,
To the bountiful charms and delights of creation
That spread their enchantments for dwellers in towns.

III.

Farewell, Happy Valleys of sunshine and pleasures,
Where streams sparkle gold and the wood-pigeons coo ;
Farewell to hushed melodies' murmuring measures
That float in the dawn, Happy Valleys, from you.
Farewell, oh, farewell,
To Nights that befell,
When the moonbeams were filling with mystical
spell
Dim glades, where the fairies find silvery treasures,
And gossamers stringing pale diamonds of dew.

IV.

Farewell to lone village and church-yard outlying,
Where weary men slumber on Nature's calm breast ;
Farewell to the peace and contentment supplying
Life's needs in the bright, humble homes of the West.
Farewell, oh, farewell,
May trouble ne'er quell
The faith and warm hearts of our kindred who
dwell
In the wilds of the land, where, through labor undying,
They love, pray, and suffer, then sink to their rest.

To me this Dartmoor region reflects some of the secrets of man's life, even as man himself, in the ancients' estimation, was but a microcosm of the great world. Here are to be found rugged mountain and bleak wilderness in sight of fertile valleys and sweet pasturages ; here sunshine and shadow, light and darkness, forever mysteriously blend and mingle ; here wild tempests hurry and scream, though the corn grows yellow and the apple red ; here birds sing while angry torrents roar, and cruel rocks cut

man's weary feet, but cooling fountains are always at hand to bathe them in ; here, finally, as in Nature and in Life, winter must surely conquer summer, and as surely yield to spring.

Then, with that pending intermediate season, with the fall of the year, my thoughts concerned themselves. Ere we left Tavybridge the glories to come were foreshadowed in gold-dust on the fern and crimson on the brier. Presently the forests so green would grow aflame with infinite splendor of autumn—and then? Then, sober russet and sear brown—a robe of mourning for departed life. Hark to the sad sigh of pattering rain and the moan of naked forests; hear the leaves rustling down to death in the gusts of a great wind. See the snow falling and falling, crowning the tors, covering the black moor and the meadow below; filling the streams with turbid freshets and strangling their music in hoarse anger; freezing on the bough; hiding the world that sleeps iron-bound. Then look forward a little farther. Yonder tangled web of dim branches, all purple under the red and frosty sunset, is alive and full of eagerness and hope; robins are singing; the dead beech-leaf, still clinging to the branch which knows him no longer, must go, for tiny brown spikes already foretell his successor; the celandine is hazarding a preliminary flower or two; wood-sorrels thrust their tender trefoil leaves through the moss; sloes are scarce plucked before the blackthorn contemplates coming bloom; catkins adorn hazel and willow and alder;

the great elms are thick with tiny red blossoms; while, at last, an emerald veil begins to tremble over larch and hawthorn. In sheltered nooks the primrose opens a wondering eye on his strange, not unpleasant world; later the brake-fern peeps brown coils above ground; dry, dead blossoms of last year's heather begin to fall; Spring eternal teaches the old melodies to blackbird and thrush and skylark, sprinkles the early rain, swings her censer of sweet savors throughout the length and breadth of the moor, worships the Lord of all in glorious ritual of song and bursting bud and busy hum of myriad life; while, amid her altars, "Man goeth forth unto his work and to his labor."

Why the Doctor should have brightened up so extremely in the neighborhood of Swindon I have never been able to understand; but he became absolutely cheerful at this town, and his mantle of melancholy in a measure descended upon me.

So, after a gleam or two of Father Thames in setting sunlight, we rush onward where much smoke is, and many locomotives hastening in divers directions or screaming like angry giant babies when lofty signals bar the way. Then appears that bewildering chaos of shining, winding steel ribbons that cross and recross, and turn and twist and swallow one another up. Yes, this is London, sure enough. Where else shall the traveller see such miles of squalid back yard? Where else shall he note such children, such cats, such poultry? Oh,

the sadness, the pathos, the sanitation of those poverty-stricken back yards!

We reach our journey's end, and the high-priests of the great god Terminus mark us for their own.

I do not want to carp on this, the last page of my narrative, but that final sixpence to a porter at the end of an expedition always annoys me. What does he do for it? Merely call a cab, put you inside, and your traps outside. It is the engine-driver who should be rewarded. You owe to him the success of your journey. Your life has been in his hands; but he has kept his eye on signals, and held the engine well under control and brought you safely along. A man never even takes the trouble to thank the engine-driver and his mate on these occasions, much less substantially acknowledge their efforts. Of course, if he did do so he would undoubtedly lose his luggage and fail to secure a hansom, and get laughed at, under the present order of things. But if such a course was the rule—if all the passengers habitually crowded round the engine and made a fuss over the stoker and driver, and shook hands with them, and congratulated them on their success—why, it would be a pleasant, hearty custom, and it would show porters that they are not everybody.

And now, kind reader, if you have struggled thus far, and are seeing the last of the Doctor and myself, suffer us here to take a final and friendly leave of you; suffer us to shake your hand, to thank you

for those valuable moments you have bestowed upon our peaceful adventures ; and suffer us, ere we vanish as a tiny ripple upon the mighty tides of literature, to say, in unison and with sincere regard,

“FARE THEE WELL.”

W. D. HOWELLS.

AN IMPERATIVE DUTY. A Novel. 12mo, Cloth, \$1 00.

CRITICISM AND FICTION. With Portrait. 16mo, Cloth, Ornamental, \$1 00.

Mr. Howells is charming. One finds no end of pleasure reading these light, bright, piquant pages. Many a good thing and many a true thing is here clothed in the diction of a master.—*Independent*, N.Y.

A BOY'S TOWN. Described for HARPER'S YOUNG PEOPLE. Illustrated. Post 8vo, Cloth, Ornamental, \$1 25.

In no novel of his are we more fascinated from cover to cover than in this truthful narration of a boy's life.—*Hartford Courant*.

THE SHADOW OF A DREAM. A Story. 12mo, Cloth, \$1 00; Paper, 50 cents.

A tale full of delicate genius, in the front rank among its kind.—*N. Y. Sun*.

A HAZARD OF NEW FORTUNES. 12mo, Cloth, 2 vols., \$2 00; Paper, Illustrated, \$1 00.

Never has Mr. Howells written more brilliantly, more clearly, more grimly, or more attractively than in this instance.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

ANNIE KILBURN. 12mo, Cloth, \$1 50; Paper, 75 cents.

It certainly seems to us the very best book that Mr. Howells has written.—*Spectator*, London.


APRIL HOPES. 12mo, Cloth, \$1 50; Paper, 75 cents.

A delightfully humorous and penetrating study of Boston society.—*Boston Transcript*.

MODERN ITALIAN POETS. Essays and Versions. With Portraits. 12mo, Half Cloth, \$2 00.

THE MOUSE-TRAP, AND OTHER FARCES. Illustrated. 12mo, Cloth, \$1 00.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

 The above works will be sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States, Canada, or Mexico, on receipt of the price.

BY CONSTANCE F. WOOLSON.

JUPITER LIGHTS. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 25.

EAST ANGELS. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 25.

ANNE. Illustrated. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 25.

FOR THE MAJOR. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 00.

CASTLE NOWHERE. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 00.

RODMAN THE KEEPER. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 00.

There is a certain bright cheerfulness in Miss Woolson's writing which invests all her characters with lovable qualities.—*Jewish Advocate*, N. Y.


Miss Woolson is among our few successful writers of interesting magazine stories, and her skill and power are perceptible in the delineation of her heroines no less than in the suggestive pictures of local life.—*Jewish Messenger*, N. Y.

Constance Fenimore Woolson may easily become the novelist laureate.—*Boston Globe*.

Miss Woolson has a graceful fancy, a ready wit, a polished style, and conspicuous dramatic power; while her skill in the development of a story is very remarkable.—*London Life*.

Miss Woolson never once follows the beaten track of the orthodox novelist, but strikes a new and richly-loaded vein, which so far is all her own; and thus we feel, on reading one of her works, a fresh sensation, and we put down the book with a sigh to think our pleasant task of reading it is finished. The author's lines must have fallen to her in very pleasant places; or she has, perhaps, within herself the wealth of womanly love and tenderness she pours so freely into all she writes. Such books as hers do much to elevate the moral tone of the day—a quality sadly wanting in novels of the time.—*Whitehall Review*, London.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

 The above works sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States, Canada, or Mexico, on receipt of the price.

BY MARY E. WILKINS.

A NEW ENGLAND NUN, and Other Stories. 16mo,
Cloth, Ornamental, \$1 25.

A HUMBLE ROMANCE, and Other Stories. 16mo,
Cloth, Extra, \$1 25.

Only an artistic hand could have written these stories, and they will make delightful reading.—*Evangelist*, N. Y.

The simplicity, purity, and quaintness of these stories set them apart in a niche of distinction where they have no rivals.—*Literary World*, Boston.

The reader who buys this book and reads it will find treble his money's worth in every one of the delightful stories.—*Chicago Journal*.

Miss Wilkins is a writer who has a gift for the rare art of creating the short story which shall be a character study and a bit of graphic picturing in one ; and all who enjoy the bright and fascinating short story will welcome this volume.—*Boston Traveller*.

The author has the unusual gift of writing a short story which is complete in itself, having a real *beginning*, a *middle*, and an *end*. The volume is an excellent one.—*Observer*, N. Y.

A gallery of striking studies in the humblest quarters of American country life. No one has dealt with this kind of life better than Miss Wilkins. Nowhere are there to be found such faithful, delicately drawn, sympathetic, tenderly humorous pictures.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

The charm of Miss Wilkins's stories is in her intimate acquaintance and comprehension of humble life, and the sweet human interest she feels and makes her readers partake of, in the simple, common, homely people she draws.—*Springfield Republican*.

There is no attempt at fine writing or structural effect, but the tender treatment of the sympathies, emotions, and passions of no very extraordinary people gives to these little stories a pathos and human feeling quite their own.—*N. Y. Commercial Advertiser*.

The author has given us studies from real life which must be the result of a lifetime of patient, sympathetic observation. . . . No one has done the same kind of work so lovingly and so well.—*Christian Register*, Boston.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

✉ The above works sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States, Canada, or Mexico, on receipt of the price.

BEN-HUR:

A TALE OF THE CHRIST. By LEW. WALLACE. 16mo, Cloth, \$1 50; Half Leather, \$2 00; Three-quarter Leather, \$2 50; Half Calf, \$3 00; Full Leather, \$3 50; Three-quarter Crushed Levant, \$4 00.—GARFIELD EDITION. 2 volumes. Illustrated with twenty full-page photo-gravures. Over 1,000 illustrations as marginal drawings by WILLIAM MARTIN JOHNSON. Crown 8vo, Silk and Gold, Uncut Edges and Gilt Tops, \$7 00. (*In a Gladstone box.*)

Anything so startling, new, and distinctive as the leading feature of this romance does not often appear in works of fiction. . . . Some of Mr. Wallace's writing is remarkable for its pathetic eloquence. The scenes described in the New Testament are rewritten with the power and skill of an accomplished master of style.—*N. Y. Times*.


Its real basis is a description of the life of the Jews and Romans at the beginning of the Christian era, and this is both forcible and brilliant. . . . We are carried through a surprising variety of scenes; we witness a sea-fight, a chariot-race, the internal economy of a Roman galley, domestic interiors at Antioch, at Jerusalem, and among the tribes of the desert; palaces, prisons, the haunts of dissipated Roman youth, the houses of pious families of Israel. There is plenty of exciting incident; everything is animated, vivid, and glowing.—*N. Y. Tribune*.

It is full of poetic beauty, as though born of an Eastern sage, and there is sufficient of Oriental customs, geography, nomenclature, etc., to greatly strengthen the semblance.—*Boston Commonwealth*.

"Ben-Hur" is interesting, and its characterization is fine and strong. Meanwhile it evinces careful study of the period in which the scene is laid, and will help those who read it with reasonable attention to realize the nature and conditions of Hebrew life in Jerusalem and Roman life at Antioch at the time of our Saviour's advent.—*Examiner*, N. Y.

The book is one of unquestionable power, and will be read with unwonted interest by many readers who are weary of the conventional novel and romance.—*Boston Journal*.

PUBLISHED BY HARPER & BROTHERS, NEW YORK.

 The above work sent by mail, postage prepaid, to any part of the United States, Canada, or Mexico, on receipt of the price.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



00021615444

